

Peres maintains poll lead, prepares to launch election counter-offensive

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Prime Minister Shimon Peres maintained a solid lead in opinion polls this week in defiance of right-wing campaign attacks against him, but experts cautioned that the Labour leader and four-time election loser is still far from assured of victory in the May 29 polls.

Surveys published Friday by the dailies Yediot Aharanot and Maariv both gave Peres 49 per cent of the vote in the race for prime minister, compared to 34 per cent for Benjamin Netanyahu, head of the main right-wing party Likud.

In the elections, Israelis will for the first time directly elect the prime minister at the same time they choose a new parliament, or Knesset. The poll results showed a gain of two-to-three points for Mr. Peres during the week, defying predictions by commentators that support

for Labour would fall in response to the launch by Likud and its ultra-nationalist ally Tsomet of an election campaign centred on personal attacks against the prime minister.

They kicked off the campaign Sunday with the slogan "Peres will divide Jerusalem," accusing him of planning to hand over the city to the Palestinians despite a national consensus that the whole city should remain the "eternal capital" of the Jewish state. Mr. Peres and other ministers, in an atmosphere Labour Party sources described as "panic," spent most of the week denying this and other allegations that if reelected Labour would offer a host of concessions to Palestinians in upcoming negotiations on the future of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

On Thursday, the Labour Party decided at a campaign strategy meeting to go on the counter-offensive with an attack campaign of its own targeting Mr. Netanyahu, party sources said.

After the meeting several ministers lashed out with a clearly coordinated barrage of criticism against Mr. Netanyahu, playing on recent rifts within Likud between the 46-year-old politician and centrist rivals.

"Even Bibi's fellow Likud members now know it was a fatal error to entrust him with the party's leadership, it would be a far graver mistake to let him near the helm of state," said Interior Minister Haim Ramon, head of the Labour media campaign for the elections, using Mr. Netanyahu's nickname.

"Netanyahu and Peres are simply not of the same caliber," added foreign Minister Ehud Barak, who is in charge

of Peres' campaign for prime minister. "Peres is experienced and Bibi did not even handle the (election alliance) talks with the Tsomet all too brilliantly. One could hardly entrust him with negotiations with the PLO," he said.

But pollsters cautioned that despite the current favourable surveys, around 12 per cent of the electorate is still floating and Mr. Peres is far from certain to maintain his lead for the 90 days remaining until the election.

Meanwhile, another poll showed that a majority of Labour Party members living in Jerusalem are prepared to yield Israeli sovereignty over part of the Holy City in exchange for peace with Palestinians.

The survey by the local Kol-Jerusalem weekly said 63 per cent of Labour members in the city would back concessions on Jerusalem, notably concerning sovereignty over Muslim holy sites.

Thirty-four per cent wanted to maintain Israeli sovereignty over the whole city and the rest were undecided.

Jerusalem's future has become a central issue in campaigning for May 29 general elections, with the Likud Party accusing Mr. Peres of planning to hand East Jerusalem to the Arabs.

In the survey, which questioned a sampling of 400 of the 17,000 Labour Party members in Jerusalem, 21 per cent said they were willing to yield sovereignty over much of East Jerusalem to the Palestinians.

Forty-two per cent said they were willing to yield sovereignty only over holy sites, possibly through internationalising Muslim and Christian sites.

Other affiliations," said Abdul-Moneim Nahas, who heads the election commission.

"We have made every guarantee as an election commission to see that a fair and free election will take place," he said.

The election — the country's first since 1986 — comes amid mounting troubles of Sudan's economy and charges that it government supports Islamic extremist groups.

The U.N. Security Council, meanwhile, has demanded Sudan cooperate in the investigation into the assassination attempt last June on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Egypt and Ethiopia have accused Sudan of com-

licity in the attack, a charge Sudan's government has repeatedly denied.

Opposition parties were banned in Sudan after the 1989 coup, and all the candidates are running as independents. If no one wins a clear majority, the top two vote-getters will compete in a runoff.

Mr. Nahas promised each candidate would be allowed to address rallies, advertise in local newspapers and hand out leaflets.

But he added the large number of candidates "might not enable us to give each candidate ample time to make his programme and rebels, who have been fighting since 1983 for more autonomy for Christians and adherents of tribal faiths in southern Sudan.

More than 1.3 million people have died in the fighting and in famines caused by the war.

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U.S. to compensate Iranians for jet shot down in 1988

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States agreed with Iran on Thursday to pay up to \$300,000 to families of each of the Iranian passengers of an Iran Air jetliner shot down by a U.S. warship in 1988, the State Department announced.

The department said that in a settlement totalling \$131.8 million, the two deeply hostile countries also resolve a series of banking disputes stemming from the American hostage crisis in Tehran, which ended in 1981.

Spokesman Nicholas Burns said that under the settlement, Iranian claims against the United States filed before the Hague-based International Court of Justice and an Iran-United States claims tribunal were dismissed on Thursday.

The Iran Air Airbus, flying from Iranian port of Bandar Abbas to Dubai, was shot down in the Gulf on July 3, 1988, by the TASS Vincennes, whose crew believed they were being attacked by an Iranian warplane. The Iran-Iraq war was raging at the time.

The 290 people aboard the plane, 248 of whom were Iranians, all died.

The State Department said that, in line with an offer of voluntary payment made at the time by then-president Ronald Reagan, \$300,000 would be paid for each wage-earning victim and \$150,000 for each non-wage-earning victim.

Mr. Reagan's offer could not be put into effect until now because of the legal proceedings, it said.

The state department said that to pay the compensation, the United States would deposit \$61.8 million with the United Bank of Switzerland in Zurich in an account jointly held by the New York Federal Reserve Bank and Iran's central bank.

Payments would be made upon joint instructions by the Swiss embassy in Tehran, which represents U.S. interests in Iran, and the Iranian Bureau of International Legal Services.

If more funds were required, the United States would replenish the account, the department said.

Mr. Burns told the news briefing that the United States continued to believe that the Vincennes was taking "appropriate defensive measures" when it shot down the Airbus.

But, he added: "We do believe that, regardless of the cause and of the events that led up to the shootdown, that we have an obligation to compensate families who lost fathers and sons and sisters and mothers."

The United States has already compensated families of non-Iranian victims of the incident.

The State Department said that under the settlement no money would be paid to the Iranian government.

However, in an apparently differing account, the official Iranian news agency IRNA said the United States would pay Iran \$30 million for the downed A-300 Airbus.

The State Department said that apart from the money set aside for the air crash families, a total of \$70 million would be paid to settle banking disputes.

Of this, \$15 million would be deposited in a security account at the Dutch Central Bank to pay American claimants who receive awards from the Iran-U.S. claims tribunal. The account was set up under the 1981 Algiers accord that freed 52 U.S. diplomats held hostage in Iran for 444 days.

The other \$55 million would be deposited at the New York Federal Reserve Bank, to be used for deposits into the security account, to pay Iran's share of the tribunal's operating expenses, or to pay debts owed by Iranian banks to U.S. nationals.

The disputes had centred on Iranian charges that the U.S. government did not return funds from certain Iranian bank accounts frozen as a result of the hostage crisis, and prevented payment of certain letters of credit.

IRNA said Iran was still seeking compensation from the United States for destruction of Iranian oil platforms in the Gulf by the U.S. Navy.

41 vie for Sudan presidency as campaign gets under way

KHARTOUM (AP) — Forty-one candidates will vie for Sudan's presidency in an election next month that a Sudanese official promised would be "fair and free."

Sudanese go to the polls starting March 8 to select 275 parliament members and president, although Sudan's military leader, Omar El Bashir, is widely expected to win the ballot.

Mr. Bashir took power in a coup in 1989, overthrowing the elected government of Sadiq El Mahdi and installing an Islamic regime.

The final list of the other presidential candidates was submitted Thursday to the election commission, officially beginning the campaign for both president and parliament.

"My duty is to make sure there is freedom of expression and freedom of movement for all candidates, irrespective of their political, social, religious, racial or

Sudanese leader asks junta to step down

BOMBAY (AFP) — A prominent Sudanese opposition leader Friday warned Khartoum's ruling military junta of civil and military unrest if it did not make way for a transitional government.

"Military action is being considered if civilised means of persuasion fail. Many other scenarios are being discussed," former Finance Minister Bashir Omar Mohammad told a news conference here.

Mr. Mohammad is garnering political support in India for a pro-democracy movement headed by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), an umbrella organisation of political parties, trade unions, women's and students' organisations.

Mr. Mohammad was finance minister when the present military junta, in alliance with the fundamentalist National Islamic Front, seized power in a coup in June 1989.

He said the NDA had

offered to cooperate in settling Sudan's economic and political crisis, if the junta stepped down in favour of a national transitional government as a prelude to democratic polls.

"Should they not take up the offer, and it looks like they will not, people will resort to other means. People are getting impatient. Economic conditions are getting worse," he said. Inflation is now more than 3,000 per cent and one dollar which was worth 10 Sudanese pounds in 1989 is now worth 1,400 Sudanese pounds.

Mr. Mohammad appealed for international help in dislodging the junta, which, he said, had got Sudan blacklisted globally as a terrorist state.

"It would be incorrect for the civilised world to turn a blind eye to such a government. The Sudanese people are being subjected to terrible human rights violations. I appeal to all global human rights organisations to look into these," he said.

Several "ongoing problems" his country has with its northern neighbour: He pointed out that Iraq still holds 600 prisoners of war — "detainees," as he called them, and there were still the issues of war reparations, including the return of Kuwaiti "goods" that the Iraqi troops took from his country, and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

Without citing any evidence, the Kuwaiti minister charged that Iraq still possesses weapons of mass destruction, saying Saddam Hussein "still hides them and he is still buying them."

Turning to the question of Lt-Gen. Hussein, the son-in-law of the Iraqi strongman who, with his brother, returned from self-exile in Jordan to Baghdad Feb. 20, Sheikh Saud raised the possibility that his was "a theatrical defection." He added, "I did not believe it was genuine."

He said Gen. Kamel's defection six months ago, which was then seen as a major blow to the Iraqi leader, also raises a question about the reported new role of a "dan in accelerating the dem.

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Kuwaiti minister calls Kamel's a 'theatrical defection'

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The Kuwaiti government still feels threatened by the regime of Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein, according to Kuwaiti Information Minister Sheikh Saud Nasir Al Sabah.

"Anytime Saddam clicks we jump," he said here on the fifth anniversary of his country's liberation from Iraqi occupation. "We cannot live in peace as long as Saddam Hussein is there and his threat continues," he told the Washington Institute for Near East Policy Feb. 21. He maintained that Iraq has "the power to threaten Kuwait and all the region."

Sheikh Saud, who was his country's ambassador in Washington during the Gulf War, is here to prepare the final touches on next week's "working" visit by Kuwaiti ruler Sheikh Jaber Al Sabah, to Washington.

The minister said the ruler, who will begin his official visit Feb. 28, is coming here for discussions with President Bill Clinton on security and economic matters as well as "the future of the region."

As far as Iraq was concerned, the minister cited

several "ongoing problems" his country has with its northern neighbour: He pointed out that Iraq still holds 600 prisoners of war — "detainees," as he called them, and there were still the issues of war reparations, including the return of Kuwaiti "goods" that the Iraqi troops took from his country, and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

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HAMAS BURNING ISRAELI FLAG AT AYAYASH RALLY: A hooded member of the Palestinian Hamas movement burns an Israeli flag during a large rally held in the West Bank town of Kalfiya Thursday to mark the 40th anniversary of the killing of Yehya Ayyash, the Palestinian bombmaker known as the Engineer. Thousands of Palestinian supporters of Hamas took part in the rally. Behind is a large banner of Mr. Ayyash. (Reuters photo)

'Farrakhan omitted Libya, Iraq, Iran upon announcing Middle East tour'

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Black activist Louis Farrakhan had notified U.S. authorities of his plans to travel to Africa and the Middle East, but did not mention he would visit Libya, Iraq and Iran, a State Department spokesman said Thursday.

During his month-long trip to 23 countries, the controversial leader of the Nation of Islam movement has visited several nations that are seen by the U.S. administration as supporting terrorism or whose human rights records have been criticised.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Mr.

Farrakhan had informed the administration of his travel plans in a letter dated Jan. 9 but "did not include" Libya, Iraq and Iran "in the itinerary."

Mr. Burns said he was not certain whether Mr. Farrakhan had requested a special authorisation from the State Department to visit Libya and Iraq. Under American law, such clearance is needed by all U.S. citizens, except for those who live in either country.

A U.S. citizen found to have travelled without authorisation to Iraq or Libya can face a prison term, Mr.

Burns said. He would not say, however, whether this would be the case for Mr. Farrakhan.

The U.S. administration had sharply criticised statements Mr. Farrakhan made in Tripoli, Baghdad and Tehran.

Responding to the criticism, Mr. Farrakhan said Saturday in Damascus he did not fear being jailed as his duty was toward God and not the United States.

He has also maintained his trip did not fall afoul of any law.

He also criticised Louis Farrakhan, the Nation of Islam leader, although he did not identify him by name, for his charges that U.N. sanctions were "a crime against humanity" and the U.S. was being "wicked" for insisting on maintaining the embargo.

The Iraqi practices are a crime against humanity, Sheikh Saud stressed. "The wickedness lies with the practices of the Iraqi regime, not the U.N. or the U.S."

In contrast, he told his audience of senior U.S. officials and Mideast diplomats, Iran is an important country in the region and Kuwait "would rather have Iran within the international security arrangements for the Gulf than outside it."

He said his government's relations with Iran have been improving, recalling that Iran's stance during Desert Storm contributed to the success of the war effort and the sanctions.

He said the Kuwaiti minister's defection six months ago, which was then seen as a major blow to the Iraqi leader, also raises a question about the reported new role of a "dan in accelerating the dem.

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JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:00 Moomins (cartoon)
14:30 Wish Kid (cartoon)
15:00 Harry and the Hendersons
15:25 Blue Heelers
16:00 Drama — Okavango
17:00 Doc. — Omnisceins
17:30 Les Compagnons de L'Adventure
18:00 Chatcau Vallon
19:00 News in French
19:15 Magazine — Fast Pas Rever
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Major Dad
20:00 The Stamp of Greatness
20:25 Drama — Hawaii Five-0
21:10 Drama — A Fine Romance (Ep. 1)
22:00 News in English
22:25 A Journey Across the Land of Islam
22:45 Feature film
23:50 Marnoso FBI

PRAYER TIMES

04:49 Sunrise
11:49 Dhur
15:02 Asr
17:32 Maghrib
18:49 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweith, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632765
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Ternassia Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 652426
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 645457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Warm weather conditions will prevail with winds westerly active. In the afternoon, temperatures are expected to drop and skies become

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ing cloudy to partly cloudy. Scattered rain is expected with winds becoming westerly active. In Aqaba, winds will be southerly active and seas rough.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 8/31
Aqaba 12/25
Deserts 5/21
Jordan Valley 12/24

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 22, Aqaba 27 Humidity readings: Amman 19 per cent, Aqaba 22 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Nidal As'ad 751672
Dr. Fayez Dahban 759155
Dr. Waqif Qudmani 89342
Dr. Mazen Nihal 830435
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637655
Nizroukh pharmacy 623672
Al Sudam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmolsani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281741
Alquds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Akram Haddad 985550
Khalil pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192.621111.637777
Fire Brigade 617011
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 616980
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overscore Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Abdull Telephone Repair 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 660100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power 636381
Company 08-53200
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn 6442816
Akilieh Maternity, J. Amn. 6424412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine Shmeisani 60701
Shmeisani Hospital 660131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musaher Hospital 6672719
The Islamic, Abdali 66612757
Al-Ahli, Abdali 661646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 7711013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 7711126
Army, Marka 89161115
Queen Alia Hospital 60258050
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)943333
Zarqa National Hospital (09)941560
Jbn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990
IRBID:
Prince Basma Hospital (02)235555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)27275

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53300. S. where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
08:30 Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)
09:00 Damascus (RJ)
09:00 Aqaba (RJ)
09:30 New Delhi (RJ)
09:55 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:05 Beirut (RJ)
10:20 Colombo (RJ)
10:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
10:50 Cairo (RJ)
11:15 London, Berlin (RJ)
11:25 Aqaba (add) (RJ)
21:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai

Jordanians return to work after Eid Al Fitr holiday

King calls Arab leaders to discuss reconciliation

AMMAN (J.T.) — Life returns to normal today following a six-day holiday for government departments and public organisations on the occasion of the Eid Al Fitr feast that marked the end of the fasting month of Ramadan in the Kingdom.

His Majesty King Hussein attended feast prayers at Al Hashemeh Mosque on the first day of the feast along with royal family members senior government officials and public figures.

After the prayers, the King met at Raghadan Palace with well wishers who included the prime minister, Cabinet members heads of public and private organisations, ambassadors, heads of the Christian communities, the Amman mayor, presidents of universities, presidents of professional organisations and other sectors of society.

The King also visited the tombs of the late Kings Abdullah and Talal and the late Queen Zein Al Sharaf and exchanged cables of good wishes on the Eid Al Fitr with heads of Arab and Islamic countries.

On the occasion, Her Majesty Queen Noor received delegations representing women unions in the various governorates who called to express their good wishes for Eid Al Fitr.

The Queen also called at the SOS children's village in Tareq, near Amman, and distributed gifts to the orphaned children.

Meanwhile, the Public Security Department (PSD) and the Civil Defence Department (CDD) reported reduced numbers of incidents and accidents during the past six days as compared to previous feast days in Jordan.

The PSD said that its departments in Al Hassa region in southern Jordan reported the injury of four persons as a result of a car accident and the death of two children while swimming in a pool in Ramtha in northern Jordan.

The CDD reported an accident in Sweileh involving two vehicles, which resulted in the injury of four persons, the food poisoning of two women in the Mafraq region and a fire in a Jabal Amman house caused by a gas cylinder that resulted in material but no human losses.

The CDD also reported a road accident involving two vehicles in Sahab, near Amman, resulting in the injury of the two drivers and an accident in Qweismeh, involving a bus and a small car, resulting in the injury of a 23-year-old man who was treated at Al Bashir Hospital.

AMMAN — (Agencies) His Majesty King Hussein has talked with the Kuwaiti emir for the first time since the Gulf crisis to discuss ways of healing the rift between Arab countries, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported Friday.

King Hussein telephoned the Kuwaiti ruler, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, and "exchanged with him points of view on ways of clearing the Arab atmosphere, boosting Arab solidarity and unify-

ing the nation, an official told AFP news agency.

Petra said that the King exchanged with Arab leaders congratulations on Eid Al Fitr and views on means of improving inter-Arab relations and achieving Arab solidarity.

The King made telephone calls during the Eid holiday to King Hassan II of Morocco, Sultan Qaboos of Oman, Syrian President Hafez Assad, Egyptian President

Hosni Mubarak, Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, Tunisian President Zein Al Abdeen Ben Ali, Algerian President Al Amin Zirwal.

Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al Bashir, Lebanese President Elias Hrawi, Mauritanian President Muawiyah Weld Sidi Ahmad Al Taye', Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Zayed Ben

Sultan Al Nahyan, Sheikh Issa Ben Salman Al Khalifa of Bahrain, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani of Qatar, Saudi Crown Prince and Deputy Prime Minister Prince Abdullah Ibn Abdul Aziz, Kuwaiti Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Sa'ad Al Abdullah Al Sabbah, and Saudi Defence Minister and second Deputy Prime Minister Sultan Ibn Abdul Aziz.

Holiday makers enjoy Aqaba despite quake

AMMAN (J.T.) — Despite a recent tremor measuring 5.3 on the Richter scale, felt in Aqaba on Feb. 21, the second day of Eid Al Fitr, people from various parts of the Kingdom went to the sea port of Aqaba to spend their holidays enjoying Aqaba's beautiful beaches and warm weather.

Reports from the main hotels in Aqaba, as well as the national camp on the southern shore, mentioned 100 per cent occupancy rates, according to the Jordanian News Agency, Petra.

Director of the Holiday Inn Hotel Abdul Rahim Al Zarou said the hotel, which can accommodate 360 guests, was fully occupied during the Eid holiday. Director of Reservations at the Aqua Marina hotels said

the three Aqua Marina hotels, which together have 400 rooms, were also fully occupied. Sami Al Abtadi, director of the Aqaba Hotel, owned by the Social Security Department, said the internal tourism activity was extraordinary during the current season, noting that it is high time efforts are streamlined to organise tourism by implementing the decisions taken previously on promoting internal tourism.

Thamer Al Favez, acting governor of Aqaba, said the government departments made every possible effort to ensure the comfort of Aqaba visitors.

Wednesday Feb. 21, a quake measuring 5.3 on the Richter scale hit the southern parts of Aqaba. Seismological

Department sources said the centre of the tremor, which lasted for 8 seconds, was 130 kilometres south of Aqaba. The sources said the new tremors were an aftershock of the recent earthquake which hit the area late last year.

Civil Defence sources said no casualties and no material losses were incurred as a result of the tremor.

His Majesty King Hussein called Mr. Favez, acting governor of Aqaba, to enquire about the people's conditions following the tremor. The King expressed thanks and appreciation to the various departments in Aqaba, in addition to the Aqaba Municipality, for their efforts to provide services to the citizens in the governorate.



Clockwise, from top left: His Majesty King Hussein joins worshippers at Eid prayers; the King inspects the guards of honour; accepts Eid greetings from senior officials; and ordinary people; he also decorates Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh and Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti with Al Nahda Medal of the First Order



Masri: Ministry to establish 'comprehensive' education schools throughout the country

AMMAN (Petra) — In implementation of His Majesty King Hussein's directives to the new government and in a bid to reduce unemployment in Jordan, the Ministry of Education is now embarking on the creation of comprehensive schools in all governorates, said Minister of Education Munther Al Masri Friday.

He said that a comprehensive school is one where students take academic

courses alongside vocational training in different trades. He added that plans are laid to ensure the enrolment of at least 50 per cent of boys and 35 per cent of girls in such schools by the year 2000.

Dr. Masri said that the ministry's integrated plan in this respect aims at dealing with the unemployment problem as called for in the King's letter of appointment to the government and at the same time boost vocational

training which opens the door wide for students to get employment after graduation from school or university.

At the same time, the integrated plan, which will be pursued until the year 2000, provides for a general overhaul of the schools' syllabuses and textbooks and the training of teachers at all levels of school education, according to the minister.

He said that the Ministry of Education will continue

to encourage the private sector to invest in education through opening new private schools and will pursue efforts to update legislations in this regard.

Dr. Masri said the ministry will go ahead with plans to build new schools in order to end the two-shift system and get rid of the rented school buildings. It will also increase and spread computer education in various government schools, the minister added.

Rifai optimistic Jordan-Israel relations will bear fruit

By Caroline Faraj
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan's newly-appointed ambassador to Israel, Omar Rifai, Friday said the Jordanian-Israeli relations entered the stage of building peace after signing all bilateral agreements provided for in the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty signed in October 1994.

Mr Rifai, who will be taking over his new responsibilities as the second Jordanian ambassador to Israel on March 1, said people have to feel the results of peace through economic growth and prosperity which are already showing.

Mr Rifai said he will pursue the work started by his predecessor, Marwan Muasher, who was appointed minister of information in Mr Kabariti's new government. He added that his first task will be to translate the bilateral agreements signed with Israel

into reality as a prelude to establishing a normal relation based on mutual respect.

Mr Rifai said he will follow up on a number of issues, including the Jordanian prisoners in Israeli jails, Jordanian passports and territories. He stressed that he will spare no effort to ensure the restoration of all Jordanian rights.

Mr Rifai did not eliminate the possibility of facing some obstacles during the implementation of the agreements, voicing hope that such obstacles will be minor and easy to overcome.

Mr Rifai said peace first starts between governments, noting that the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty is almost 18 months old. In order for peace to be genuine and accepted by the people, the people should see its fruits, in terms of economic growth, prosperity, development and investment projects and less unem-

ployment, he said.

Mr Rifai added that all indicators are forthcoming and will definitely be felt by the people.

The ambassador expressed hope that the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, which is part of a comprehensive solution, will serve as a model for the peaceful Arab-Israeli relations.

Judging by the developments on the Syrian-Israeli peace track, one can see positive indicators regarding the possibility of reaching a comprehensive, peaceful solution, he said.

Mr Rifai said the overall objective of the Middle East peace process, as defined during the Madrid peace conference, is to reach a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region, noting that the timing and method differ from one track to another. Given this objective, Syria and Israel will eventually reach genuine peace, and

so will Lebanon, Mr Rifai added.

On his expectations for the forthcoming Israeli elections, which will be held in May, Mr Rifai said it was premature to talk about their results or about Israeli trends. He voiced hope that moderation will be the result of the elections' results.

Regarding the impact of the elections results on the Jordanian-Israeli relations, Mr Rifai said he does not believe the results will have any impact of these relations because they are based and governed by a joint peace treaty.

As for his future plans to enhance Jordanian Israeli relations, Mr Rifai said he will work hard to enhance relations with all Israeli communities, particularly the Arab community of 1948 who constitute almost 20 per cent of the population of Israel.

King Fahd back in charge

(Continued from page 1)

ans at a U.S.-run military training centre.

His handing over of day-to-day running of the kingdom had seemed formally to endorse Prince Abdullah as heir apparent and to stifle speculation about the Saudi succession.

Diplomats and Arab officials said the king's health seemed to have improved recently. He has appeared on television and on Monday read his first address to the nation since November.

"He has looked a lot better in the last few weeks. He's less wobbly, far more animated, gesturing. He looks less like an invalid," said a Riyadh-based Western diplomat.

But his sudden return baffled analysts and diplomats.

"I'm puzzled and surprised."

at his return," said Rosemary Hollis, head of the Middle East programme at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) in London.

"All the feedback I got was that, despite appearances, it was very, very unlikely, and that he was not at all well."

Analysts said some in the kingdom did not relish the thought of Prince Abdullah, reputed to be less open to the West, taking over completely.

"Abdullah was expected to exercise tighter control of the purse-strings than the current incumbent and he has the character and background to stand up to the religious establishment," one analyst said.

"Some of those who would be affected by this realised they couldn't do anything ab-

out it but they weren't looking forward to it and were bracing themselves with anticipation."

A Western diplomat in Riyadh said the king's return came as a surprise. "The assumption was that it was fairly unlikely the king would resume power fully."

King Fahd serves as his own prime minister but his younger brothers and Prince Abdullah often chair the weekly cabinet meetings, due

to resume on March 4. Strategic decisions in the kingdom are traditionally taken by consensus in consultation among senior members of the large Al Saud royal family.

Diplomats said leadership changes could show differences in style but not major swings in general policies, including oil strategies, which have immediate impact on global markets.

The kingdom, exports about seven million of its daily production of eight million barrels of oil.

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Israel, Hizbollah

(Continued from page 12)

cycle of violence," he told AFP.

In a related development Friday, Hizbollah offered to exchange the remains of two Israeli soldiers for two Lebanese guerrilla leaders abducted by Israel.

Hizbollah leader Sheikh Hassan Nassrallah said the movement would hand over the remains if Israel freed Hizbollah cleric Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid seized in 1989 and Mustapha Dirani, leader of the pro-Iranian faithful resistance taken by Israeli commandos in May 1994.

Arab pharmaceutical union to start seminar in Cairo

AMMAN (Petra) — The Amman-based Arab Union of Pharmaceutical Manufacturing and Medical Appliances (AUPAM) opens its seventh seminar in Cairo Wednesday, with the participation of delegates from 16 Arab countries as well as the Arab League and the Council of Arab Economic Unity, said union Chairman and Secretary General Nizar Jardaneh Friday.

The seminar, which is

being organised in cooperation with the Egyptian company of pharmaceuticals and chemical appliances, is expected to review working papers dealing with the effects of the rules of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the Arab-Israeli peace accords on the Arab drug markets, said Mr. Jardaneh.

He said other papers deal with the implementation of Arab health ministers' resolutions and recommenda-

tions in matters related to the marketing of Arab drugs, the unification of Arab laws and legislations concerning marketing drugs in Arab countries, drug manufacturing in the Palestinian self-rule areas and cooperation among Arab pharmaceutical firms in research and development of the drug manufacturing industry.

Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, the six-member

states of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Iraq, Palestine and Syria are attending the meeting, he added.

The AUPAM, which was established in 1986 as an Arab League agency upon recommendations by the Arab health ministers, aims at boosting and organising drug manufacturing in the Arab World and promoting cooperation among Arab pharmaceutical firms.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- *Abstract (plastic) art by Mirvat Emile Wahhab at the Housing Bank Complex Gallery (until March 5).
- *Paintings by Jordanian and other Arab artists at Alia Art Gallery (until March 5).
- *Engravings by French artists at the French Cultural Centre (until Feb. 29).

Yeltsin rules out talks with Chechen 'bandits'

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin said Friday that he was ready for compromise to restore peace to Chechnya but he ruled out cutting a deal with those he described as "bandits".

Mr. Yeltsin, in a televised "State of the Nation" address, suggested that a new Kremlin peace plan would rely on the region's pro-Moscow government shouldering a far greater share of the burden for Chechnya's future.

But he gave no details of the initiative to end the 14-month conflict with separatists in which thousands have been killed. He said two competing expert groups had already submitted their proposals to him.

Mr. Yeltsin's chances of reelection in the June 16 presidential polls have been dealt a severe blow by the fighting in Chechnya which has intensified in recent weeks.

Mr. Yeltsin said Russia was not inclined to hold peace talks with rebel leader Dzhokhar Dudayev or others whom Moscow has accused of launching a series of terrorist actions in Chechnya and outside the region.

"We are ready for talks with any political forces interested in establishing peace in Chechnya," he said.

"But we are not ready to make a deal with bandits, even less behind the backs of the legitimate government," Mr. Yeltsin added referring to the Moscow-installed government of Doku Zavgayev which the separatists do not recognise.

"Today I can say that (the peace plan) will not contain one single step but will include a series of complex measures," Mr. Yeltsin said.

"It will include talks as well as finalising the creation of a legitimate Chechen authority which will take up more responsibility for the situation in the republic."

In a wider written address, Mr. Yeltsin ruled out an immediate withdrawal of troops from Chechnya to avoid bloodshed between Chechens who collaborated with Russia and those who opposed it.

Mr. Yeltsin was speaking on the 52nd anniversary of the mass deportation by Soviet dictator Josef Stalin of all Chechen people from their north Caucasus land to Kazakhstan and Siberia for alleged collaboration with the German invaders.

In a clear bid to calm fears regularly voiced in Chechnya that another deportation is afoot, Mr. Yeltsin said Russia's military action there was not aimed against ordinary people.

"The power of state enforcement is aimed against the bandits who possess huge stocks of weapons," he said. "Federal forces are helping the legitimate authorities of the Chechen Republic to start a normal life, guarantee security for its population."

The pro-Moscow Chechen government Friday stepped up security in the regional capital Grozny to prevent pro-independence demonstrations.

It took Russians and pro-Moscow Chechens a week to break up a pro-independence protest in the capital Grozny earlier this month in which thousands of people demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops sent in by Mr. Yeltsin in December 1994.

Reuters correspondent Lawrence Sheets reported from Grozny that the city, still in ruins after Russian bomb and artillery attacks in early 1995, looked quiet Friday with Chechens quietly commemorating their day of mourning for the 1944 deportations.

Meanwhile saboteurs blew up a gas pipeline in Chechnya Thursday and leaders of neighbouring Ingushetia accused Moscow of trying to drag it into the Chechen conflict.

Russian news agencies quoted the deputy president of Ingushetia, Boris Agapov, as saying Russian troops entered two border villages Wednesday and killed two civilians.

"The leadership of Ingushetia called on the federal forces to withdraw all their military units from the region... And stop trying to unleash military activities on the territory of Ingushetia," Interfax News Agency said.

"The military justifies its actions by saying it has information there are Chechen rebels in these villages but even if this is the case, Ingushetia has its own security organs who can resolve this issue," Echo Moskvy Radio said, quoting Mr. Agapov.

A Defence Ministry spokesman in Moscow said he had no information on the allegations.

Pro-Moscow Chechen officials blamed the pre-dawn attack on the gas pipeline, the second on an energy installation in Chechnya in two days, on rebels loyal to separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev.

There was no immediate word from the guerrillas themselves to substantiate this.

"These are links in a single chain of provocations by Mr. Dudayev's men who are striving to destabilise the situation in the republic," Abdul Bugayev, first deputy prime minister in the pro-Moscow regional government, told ITAR-TASS news agency.

The attack near Sholkovskaya, close to Chechnya's border with the Dagestan region, triggered a fierce fire which was only put out several hours later after the pipeline was switched off.

It occurred after a week of heavy fighting in the east of the Muslim territory and fuelled tension on the eve of a day of mourning to mark the 52nd anniversary of the mass deportation of Chechens to Kazakhstan.

The Chechen Interior Ministry said it had put 4,000 men on alert for Friday and reinforced checks at road-blocks in and around the regional capital Grozny.

Mr. Zavgayev urged people to keep calm Friday and stay away from mass meetings which he said could lead to a "sharpening of the situation."

TASS said rebels kept up attacks on Russian troops near Novogrozny, 60 kilometres east of Grozny, despite claims by Defence Minister Pavel Grachev Wednesday that their forces had been crushed.

It reported particularly intensive fire by guerrillas on Russian positions near the locality of Tsentroy and said six Russian soldiers were killed there and eight wounded in the 48 hours up to noon Thursday.



Russian President Boris Yeltsin follows soldiers of the guard of honour to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier next to the Kremlin wall Friday. The ceremony was held in connection with the Defenders of the Fatherland Day (former Soviet Army Day) (Reuters photo)

Yeltsin: NATO growth is top foreign policy issue

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin said Friday Russia was worried that the West was ignoring its interests on the world stage and made clear the biggest problem was NATO's expansion plans.

"Russia still has quite a few foreign policy problems," Mr. Yeltsin said in his annual "state of the nation" address to a joint session of parliament which touched only fleetingly on foreign affairs.

"The possibility of geopolitical changes which would be unpleasant for the state has not disappeared, above all connected with the possibility of the NATO military structure moving closer to Russian borders."

Russia has long argued that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) plans to expand to include countries from Eastern and Central Europe threaten its security, but NATO has sought to ease these concerns.

Mr. Yeltsin's comments suggested he was aware of the powerful Communist and nationalist lobbies' concerns that Russia must defend its interests better in world diplomacy.

But his speech concentrated almost entirely on domestic issues ahead of a presidential election on June 16. He stuck to familiar ground on foreign policy and declined to take the opportunity to launch any fierce attacks on the West.

Mr. Yeltsin made clear he was upset by opposition abroad to moves to forge closer ties between countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which comprises 12 of the 15 former Soviet republics.

The West is wary of any actions that could raise the prospect of the Soviet Union being reformed.

Mr. Yeltsin also referred in passing to resentment that Russia's voice had not been heard in the peace-making process in former Yugoslavia and expressed concern that other countries might not stick to the terms of international arms treaties.

"We are alarmed by the calls made in a number of countries to ignore and directly contradict Russian's legal interests in the CIS, in the course of regulating the Yugoslav crisis, in questions of the balance of conventional arms in Europe and observing to the letter the ABM treaty," he said.

Mr. Yeltsin's unease over the future of the anti-ballistic missile (ABM) treaty signed by Moscow and Washington in 1972 appeared to be caused by plans by Republican congressional leaders in the United States to hold hearings on the validity of the treaty.

President Yeltsin, taking another swipe at his hawkish defence minister, blasted Russia's military leaders Friday for mishandling military reform and neglecting the interests of servicemen.

"I do not share the opinion of some top

military leaders that reform is going well," Mr. Yeltsin said in his annual State of the Nation address to parliament, clearly referring to Defence Minister Pavel Grachev.

"How can someone talk about success if the armed forces get too little care from state bodies and their minimal needs are not met," said Mr. Yeltsin.

Mr. Yeltsin who has announced plans to seek reelection in June, wants to win support from millions of families of soldiers and officers as well as workers at military enterprises.

The armed forces long received priority attention and financial backing from the Soviet government but have suffered severe hardships since the Communist superpower collapsed.

Top officers complain that a lack of cash does not allow them to buy new weapons and carry out proper training for the troops, while many military enterprises are about to close down because of a lack of orders.

They are also furious about low pay and often receive their wages months late.

The military have openly accused Moscow politicians of betraying them in Chechnya, where the armed forces were sent in December 1994 to quell the rebel region's independence bid.

The Chechen conflict has damaged traditional respect for the armed forces and fuelled military service dodging by young men reluctant to fight in the unpopular conflict.

"Relations between the professional military and society and the attitude of officers towards the government and politicians are now nearly as bad as in 1917," the liberal newspaper Sevodnya wrote Friday, referring to the Bolshevik Revolution.

The success of the Communist takeover in 1917 was helped by support from the army, exhausted by three years of World War I and negligence by top authorities.

In last year's state of the nation address, Mr. Yeltsin also spoke of his discontent with the pace of military reform and pronounced 1995 as a "year of military reform". But little has been done to change the situation in the armed forces.

"The way the military reform has been handled so far, without any system, cannot be called a real reform," Mr. Yeltsin said Friday.

Gen. Grachev has rejected calls by Russian liberals to reject conscription and reduce the armed forces dramatically below the planned 1.9 million. He has said a professional army would be too expensive for Russia now.

Mr. Yeltsin has long defended Gen. Grachev, rewarding him for his personal loyalty. But his recent criticism suggests he is blaming Gen. Grachev for the failure of reforms as June's presidential election approaches.

U.S. to help train future Angolan army

LUANDA (R) — A United States general has said his country had agreed to assist Angola in training soldiers in a future integrated Angolan army including former UNITA guerrillas.

General James Jamerson, a four-star general in the U.S. Air Force and second in command of the U.S. European Command, told reporters during a two-day visit to Angola.

"We are beginning the initial exploration of military cooperation. There is a programme called the International Military Education and Training Programme (IMET)... It is the right kind of programme to begin a military relationship."

"My estimate is that much of this will be used for training and there will be plenty of opportunities of that with the integration of the two forces," he said.

The Angolan government and UNITA signed a peace pact in November 1994 to end two decades of fighting which began soon after independence from Portugal in 1975.

Gen. Jamerson said it would be up to the Angolan military to decide on exactly what areas training was needed.

"We would assist in training soldiers in a variety of areas... It is important to consider that Angola has a competent military now... and it would be up to the Angolan military to look at what is available and see what types of training would be important

to them, such as the training of non-commissioned officers..."

Angola's army chief, General Joao De Matos told reporters earlier: "We are doing an analysis of the situation and addressing fundamental questions on cooperation."

Gen. Jamerson said his two-day visit had focused on Angola's 15-month-old peace process after talks with the government and UNITA.

"This is a critical time for Angola and it is time for parties to come together to find peace, to not consider this as who won, who lost, but to consider this as Angola's future. My bottom line assessment would be significant optimism but still a very tough time ahead."

Gen. Jamerson said he had urged his military counterparts to quickly integrate the two armies.

A senior Angolan military official said a private U.S.-based military company, made up of retired officers, had also approached the government offering help.

"The Military Professional Resources Inc. (MPRI) has approached the government on offering Angola's military assistance in training and other areas," he told Reuters.

He said the first meeting between MPRI and senior Angolan army officers had taken place at the end of last year.

Thieves steal keys to Windsor Castle

LONDON (R) — Thieves sparked a major security alert when they stole a car containing 20 security passes and three keys to Windsor Castle, where Queen Elizabeth spends much of her free time, British newspapers reported. Police chiefs held urgent meetings after the keys and passes, which had been left in a car belonging to a member of the royal family's special protection team, vanished when the vehicle was stolen, the reports said. "In the current climate, with the Irish Republican Army active on the mainland, it was an act of extreme stupidity to have left these things in the car," a senior police source told the Sun newspaper.

Pavarotti admits affair with young secretary

ROME (R) — Italian tenor Luciano Pavarotti has finally admitted he is having an affair with his young secretary, an Italian magazine said. Chi magazine splashed photographs across the front cover of its latest edition showing the well-built Pavarotti and his 26-year-old secretary Nicoletta Mantovani kissing in the sea during a recent holiday in Barbados. Approached by a journalist, 60-year-old Pavarotti said he was very happy with Mantovani. Chi said Pavarotti's wife of 35 years, Adia, had already started divorce proceedings against the opera superstar.

'Don't make a monkey out of chimps'

SAO PAULO (R) — Brazil's Environmental Protection Institute said it would try to ban television advertisements for beer and soft drinks which depict chimpanzees driving jeeps and swilling drinks amid bikini-clad women. "Driving a car and drinking beer or soda is not a monkey's natural habitat," said Lilian Daher, a spokeswoman for the government's environmental institute Ibama. An Ibama attorney will ask a Sao Paulo judge to block the airing of all ads showing chimpanzees in unnatural surroundings, Ms. Daher said.

Sicily zoo keepers ruffle feathers in pay protest

PALERMO (R) — Six zoo keepers, who say they have not been paid for over a year, locked themselves in a cage full of birds and vowed not to come out until they received their pay cheques. The six keepers moved in with the zoo's geese and herons in the Sicilian capital's famous D'Orleans Park and said if their demands were not met they would also start a hunger strike. "The local authorities take care of the animals but don't do anything for us," said one of the workers. The small Palermo zoo is owned by regional authorities who pay a private operator, Salvatore Lauricella, to run the park.

Argentine judge orders Iglesias ranch sold

BUENOS AIRES (R) — An Argentine judge has ordered that a ranch owned by Spanish singer Julio Iglesias be auctioned on March 1 unless he pays a local songwriter \$300,000 for plagiarism, a court official said. Songwriter Larry Moreno sued Iglesias in 1987, alleging his song Morrinhas bore a close resemblance to his own tune Yolanda. Civil Court Judge Carmen Ubiedo ruled in 1993 that at least eight consecutive bars of the song were taken from Yolanda and ordered Iglesias to pay damages. Iglesias appealed and lost.



The Princess of Wales (right) and her friends Jemima and Imran Khan (left) enjoy a show put on by patients at the Shaikat Kharum Memorial Cancer Hospital Thursday. The princess was in Lahore for a two-day visit (Reuters photo)

Diana visit raises \$160,000 for Imran cancer hospital

LAHORE, Pakistan (AFP) — Princess Diana shrugged off her reclusive image as she signed autographs for 35 minutes at a special dinner that raised \$160,000 for a cancer hospital run by former Pakistan cricket star Imran Khan.

The princess left Lahore Friday, the morning after the dinner, the highlight of her two-day private visit to help the hospital.

The princess made no speech to the 600 guests who were served traditional Pakistani food at the Shaikat Khanum Memorial Hospital, named after Imran's mother, who died from cancer.

But Princess Diana was pressed into service to sign autographs after Imran said women guests could approach.

Mr. Khan said: "I am very grateful to the princess for coming here and I hope she will visit us again."

He said people who attended the function were mostly those who had contributed to the hospital in the past. "I hope they would continue to support this hospital," he added.

Then Mr. Khan said women guests would be allowed to approach the princess and soon after, the estranged wife of Prince Charles was surrounded. It took her about 35 minutes to sign all the books and she also spoke with some of the women.

Princess Diana, again wearing Pakistani-style kameez shirt and shalwar baggy trousers, this time in off-white, arrived at the dinner at 9:45 p.m. and left again at midnight.

The dinner was also attended by Imran's close family and his mother-in-law Lady Anabel Goldsmith.

Businessmen, lawyers, hospital consultants and other guests paid 10,000 rupees (\$290) each.

Princess Diana sat with Mr. Khan's wife Jemima, Lady Anabel and the hospital's chief executive Dr. Nausherwan Burki. She did not address the guests but appeared very relaxed.

It was typical Pakistani atmosphere. Waiters, clad in traditional Pakistani dresses wore turbans. A famous Pakistani kathak dancer, Professor Saga, performed while youngsters presented folk dances.

Imran who wore white Pakistani dress and a black jacket, looked very happy and relaxed while security outside remained tight.

Princess Diana left Lahore in a private jet owned by Anglo-French tycoon Sir James Goldsmith, Mr. Khan's father-in-law.

Princess Diana's arrival Wednesday on what was described as a two-day humanitarian trip had raised speculation that Mr. Khan had invited her to boost his political ambitions.

Mr. Khan, 43, who led Pakistan to the victory in the 1992 Cricket World Cup has frequently criticised the country's political system as corrupt and declared his intention to lead a crusade for reforms and human rights.

Popular among the country's youth, Mr. Khan who has not yet formed his own party, is widely regarded as a potential alternative to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

Ms. Bhutto was not invited to the dinner and state-run television screened only a few seconds of footage showing Princess Diana with her friend Jemima on her arrival at the Lahore airport lounge.

The princess told reporters her visit was to help raise funds for Mr. Khan's hospital. She said she would also try to raise support for the hospital in Britain.

Under fire, Basque party tries to muster big election rally

MADRID (AFP) — Stung by a government crackdown and public disgust over Basque terrorism, the political wing of the separatist group ETA will try to fill a stadium Saturday at its main rally for elections 10 days off.

Sources in the Herri Batasuna Party said the rally in the Basque city of San Sebastian was strictly electoral and not prompted by the arrest this week of two senior party officials.

Still, Herri Batasuna is widely expected to use the gathering at a 30,000-seat football stadium in that elegant seaside city to hit back at the Socialist government of Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez.

Facing public outrage in the wake of two high-profile ETA murders in February, the government moved against Herri Batasuna this week by arresting two of its leaders and spokesmen.

One of them, Jon Idigoras, remains in jail near Madrid after being arrested in connection with the party's use of an Eta propaganda video at campaign rallies.

The other, Floren Aioz, was detained Thursday and later released after questioning.

ETA wants to include Navarra in the independent homeland it has been fighting to create since the late 1960s in a battle that has left hundreds of people dead. ETA is a Basque acronym for Basque Homeland and Freedom.

Herri Batasuna, which means People United, has called on supporters to turn out en masse Saturday in a show of support ahead of the March 3 election, which Mr. Gonzalez's Socialists are expected to lose.



Seven-year-old David Mansell walks through what once was his bedroom in his family's trailer home in Poolville, Texas. Over 40,000 acres of land in the North Texas region burned in a raging grass fire (Reuter photo)

Firefighters contain huge Texas grass fires

DALLAS (R) — Firefighters and military helicopters managed to contain raging grass fires in north Texas late Thursday, but not before the blazes left behind a trail of destruction.

The fires consumed thousands of acres of prairie land north of Fort Worth and destroyed dozens of homes before the emergency teams managed to contain most of them before dark.

"It looks pretty good now. We have it contained and if the fire lines hold through the night, it'll be under control in the morning," Fire Marshal Jeff Edwards said in the morning. "Fire Marshall Jeff Edwards said that the biggest, 16-kilometer long fire in Parker County and Wise County.

But State Forestry and Fire Service officials said smaller fires were still igniting and they would stay on full alert for further blazes.

The fires, among the worst in the state's history, were caused by a mix of intense 95-degree Fahrenheit (35-Celsius) heat, dry grass, strong winds and suspected arson from juveniles.

"We are in an extremely dangerous situation... Texas is a tinderbox right now," Governor George Bush said on a tour of the affected areas.

He promised families left homeless that they would be helped and said he had appealed to President Bill Clinton on Thursday to declare Texas a disaster zone and extend emergency aid.

Heavy machinery as well as air force helicopters and planes were deployed throughout the day to dig firebreaks and drop thousands of gallons of water and chemicals onto the fires which began Wednesday.

Fire officials said 16,000 to 25,000 acres (6,464 to 10,100 hectares) of land was consumed by fire over the last two days. Between 50 and 80 homes and dozens of barns were wrecked.

About 50 firefighters and civilians suffered smoke inhalation, shock or exhaustion. No deaths were reported.

Television pictures showed devastated homeowners looking through the charred remains of their houses trying to salvage any belongings.

One tearful resident of Parker County, Joann Page, said she and her husband arrived home to find their house burned to the ground and their dog dead. "We usually take our dog with us but this time we left him in the pen," she told local television.

Fire departments and volunteers from across the state rushed to the areas worst hit to help out. At the height of the crisis, the biggest fire was consuming 1,000 acres (404 hectares) of land every half hour, one fire official said.

Buchanan, Alexander trade barbs, attack Dole

TEMPE, Arizona (R) — Republican presidential candidates Pat Buchanan and Lamar Alexander hammered each other and played an absent U.S. Senate majority leader Bob Dole in a televised debate Thursday as the bruising 1996 presidential campaign came to the west.

Sen. Dole, still reeling from Mr. Buchanan's victory Tuesday in the New Hampshire primary, did not show up for the debate, held five days before the Arizona primary, the next major test of the campaign.

Four of those seeking the Republican nomination to face U.S. President Bill Clinton in November entered the debate: Mr. Buchanan, who is leading a populist revolt against the Republican establishment; Mr. Alexander, a former education secretary and governor of Tennessee; millionaire publisher Steve Forbes, and California Representative Bob Dornan, who has won only a handful of votes in the race so far.

Arizona newspapers, radio and television stations took Sen. Dole's absence as a snub to the state and political operatives. Even some from the Sole camp said it was a major mistake that risked another defeat.

Sen. Dole, campaigning in Colorado, dismissed the criticism. "We don't let other people determine our schedule. We determine our own schedule. We want to win the nomination. I debate every day in the Senate. These guys don't know how to debate," he said.

Mr. Alexander, who was narrowly behind Sen. Dole in New Hampshire, came out swinging against the 72-year-old Senate majority leader. "Senator Dole should be here tonight if he wants to be the Republican nominee for president," he said.

"Arizona is an important state and this is an idea contest and our nominee can't win on negative ads, endorsements and ducking idea contests like tonight," he said.

Mr. Alexander then turned around to attack Mr. Buchanan. "Pat, I'm not going to let you hijack our party... Buchananism is wrong for our country, wrong for our party," he declared, accusing Mr. Buchanan of trying to build a wall around the country and adopt a policy of isolationism.

Mr. Buchanan, never one to shy away from a brawl, said he represented a new kind of bold, unapologetic conservatism that spoke for people with no voice and for unborn children.

"I would say to the former secretary of education, you need a little education, Lamar," he said.

Polls show Arizona Republicans largely undecided about who to vote for to face Mr. Clinton, who is unopposed for the Democratic nomination.

But the spotlight was on Mr. Buchanan, who emerged from New Hampshire with tremendous momentum for his anti-free trade, anti-big business crusade. His sudden rise has scared many Republicans who fear Mr. Buchanan is splitting their party and will lead it to certain defeat by Mr. Clinton.

The outlines of a stop Buchanan movement appeared to be taking shape, with party moderates like former Housing Secretary Jack Kemp, Retired General Colin Powell and New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani attacking him as an extremist.

Mr. Buchanan was quick to strike back. "I would urge my critics and opponents in the strongest terms to stick to the issues, stick to the ideas, stop the name-calling because it is you who are risking the unity of this party, not I," he told reporters at Tucson Airport.

Gen. Powell, who could have been a prime Republican contender but spurned efforts to draft him last autumn, said Mr. Buchanan was preaching intolerance and he could not vote for him.

Tamil Tigers kill 11 Sri Lanka villagers

COLOMBO (Agencies) — Tamil Tiger guerrillas raided a Sinhalese village in north-central Sri Lanka and killed 11 people for the loss of at least 10 of their own fighters, officials and the military said Friday.

About 50 gunmen from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) stormed the remote village of Mahanikaweta in the district of Anuradhapura and killed two soldiers and two constables guarding it, officials said.

Chief military spokesman Sarath Munasinghe said the Tigers then killed seven civilians but were driven out by military reinforcements who killed at least 10 guerrillas.

Five automatic rifles and five unexploded bombs were recovered from the rebels.

"This is a big setback to the Tigers," Brig. Munasinghe told reporters. "They are losing heavily because security forces and the civilians reacted promptly and took counter measures."

The latest massacre came four months after a spate of similar attacks against Sinhalese villages, killing at least 125 civilians.

The separatist LTTE has been accused of killing Sinhalese civilians in a bid to drive them out of the northern and eastern regions which they claim as their traditional homeland.

In another development, two soldiers died in a mine explosion in the northern peninsula of Jaffna late Thursday, Brig. Munasinghe said.

Security forces captured Jaffna town, the former bastion of the Tigers after nearly 50 days of fighting last year but the guerrillas planted explosives before they were chased out.

Meanwhile Sri Lanka's justice minister said Friday a devolution package for the Tamils was the last chance to find a political solution to the country's ethnic crisis for the next 20 years.

Professor G.L. Peiris, a key figure behind many of the proposals, said there were bound to be hurdles as the legal draft fights its way through an all-party parliamentary select committee, parliament and then a national referendum.

"There are stumbling blocks of different kinds," he told a cabinet press conference.

"The first is the polarised nature of Sri Lankan politics which has been the principal reason why a solution has been difficult to arrive at over the years."

But now, he added, there was wide recognition on all sides of the need to lift the problem away from confrontational politics and find some kind of consensus.

He said it would not be useful to consider failure.

"I am bold to announce that if this fails, for the next 20 years there will be no political solution," he said.

"Everyone is aware of the need for a political solution... There is a spirit of goodwill. Minorities realise that extravagant demands will be impracticable."

The peace package offers wide-ranging executive and legislative powers to Tamils who make up about 17 per cent of majority-Sinhalese Sri Lanka and who have long complained of discrimination in language, education and employment.

Right-wing Sinhalese and many Buddhist monks criticise the plan for in effect breaking up the country and rewarding the LTTE, who have fought for a homeland in the north and east since 1983.

Moderate Tamil parties have cautiously welcomed the proposals but warned against any attempt to dilute them to appease right-wing critics.

The main opposition United National Party (UNP), which has 85 seats in the 225-seat parliament, can block the plan, which needs to be passed by a two-thirds majority in parliament.

The ruling People's Alliance, which knocked the UNP from 17 years in power in 1994, has 113 seats.

The proposals go before the select committee, where they need a simple majority, on March 7.

China is afraid of immediate reunification with Taiwan — Lee

TAIPEI (AFP) — Taiwanese President Lee Teng-Hui Friday said China was afraid of immediate reunification with Taiwan because of its own internal problems.

"They (China) have their own problems, even more serious than ours. They are afraid to have immediate unification with (Taiwan) if they are asked to do so," Mr. Lee told some 150 foreign and local journalists in a press conference, his first at his office in almost two years.

Mr. Lee said Taiwan would not give up its efforts to increase substantive ties with other countries even though the move would anger China, which is massing some 150,000 men for a large-scale military exercise off Taiwan's doorstep to intimidate the island ahead of its presidential elections.

"The Chinese Communists should not find fault of our pragmatic diplomatic policy. They shouldn't think our ties with others would hamper their development," he said.

He said Taiwan removed its state of emergency in 1991 to ease hostility with China, but until now, Beijing has made no action to respond to this move.

He said Beijing had criticised him for only paying lip service to the reunification issue, but even if Taiwan asked for unification with China immediately, Beijing would be unable to do so because it has too many internal problems.

He said a "peace treaty" between Taiwan and China was essential for improving mutual ties and eventual reunification.

He said progress towards democracy on this Nationalist island had scared China and forced it to resort to military threats in a sign of its own weakness.

Mr. Lee said that Beijing was left with no choice but to accuse him of seeking to promote independence since Taiwan's progress towards democracy — which accelerated under his presidency — had left the mainland powerless to fight back.

"Our ability to break out of (diplomatic confinement) and show ourselves in the international arena... the fact that Taiwan can breathe now... (this) scares the Chinese Communists," he said.

Taiwan and China separated after the end of a civil war in 1949, but both the Nationalist and the Communist governments, despite denouncing each other's sovereignty claim over all of China, have agreed that the two sides should reunite eventually.

China has warned that if Taiwan declares independence, it will attack the island. It also sees moves by Taiwan to expand its international profile as an attempt to seek independence.

Speaking a month before key presidential elections, Mr. Lee expressed strong confidence in the island's armed forces, saying "they are monitoring the situation closely... confident and well prepared."

But he stopped short of saying what moves he would take as commander-in-chief, if China should invade Taiwanese territory.

Mr. Lee, whom Beijing suspects is steering the island towards independence, is running for a second term as the champion of the ruling Kuomintang (KMT).

Mr. Lee's unofficial trip to the United States last June infuriated Beijing, which considers the island part of its territory. China subsequently launched two missile drills and large-scale manoeuvres off Taiwan's coast between July and November as a protest.

The 73-year-old Lee is joining the presidential race with millionaire Premier Lien Chan as his running mate.

The move contrasted with his remarks, made at least twice, in 1990 and 1991, that he would retire after the current term ends in May.

Meanwhile, Mr. Lee's campaign opponent, Peng Ming-min of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party, Friday announced if he was elected, he would immediately declare independence should China attack the island.

He said he was willing to hold talks with China on a country-to-country basis and invite Chinese President Jiang Zemin to visit Taiwan.

India, Pakistan clash over Kashmir border

JAMMU, India (AFP) — Troops from India and Pakistan exchanged heavy fire along the disputed Kashmir border as the United States' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) warned the two nuclear-capable nations posed the biggest threat to international security.

Pakistani troops fired "over 2,000 rounds" on Indian troops late Thursday from South Chakra Post in Samba sector, 45 kilometres from this winter capital of Jammu and Kashmir state, Indian officials said Friday.

The firing occurred as CIA Director John Deutch told the Senate Select Intelligence Committee in Washington that "the Indian subcontinent... presents the greatest threats to world security."

Mr. Deutch said military confrontation between the two nations needed to be avoided at the risk of triggering a nuclear arms race between New Delhi and Islamabad.

"We are concerned that India is considering the possibility of a nuclear test. And we have judged that if India should test, Pakistan would follow," he said.

Relations between India and Pakistan, which have fought three wars since 1947, remain "unsatisfactory," Mr. Deutch said, adding that "the potential for conflict is high."

"Since each of these nations possess nuclear capability, every effort must be made to support our U.S. policymakers who are seeking to avoid military confrontation," he said.

"We are especially concerned about Pakistani efforts, some in cooperation with China, to acquire additional nuclear technology," he added.

However, the Indian BSF spokesman said the shooting across the militarised border involved only medium and light machine guns in what he said was an exercise to provide cover for Kashmiri militants and Pakistani terrorists trying to enter Kashmir.

"No one was injured in the attack," he said.

New Delhi accuses Islamabad of arming and training Muslim militants fighting to end Indian rule over Kashmir, where a bitter separatist campaign has left more than 12,000 people dead since 1989.

Chirac bids to repair test damage

PARIS (AFP) — President Jacques Chirac sought to repair the damage caused by France's recently-ended series of underground tests in the South Pacific when he announced nuclear cuts along with drastic reforms of the country's defence system.

Mr. Chirac unexpectedly announced during a television interview Thursday night that he was ending France's production of fissile materials used in making nuclear weapons.

The gambit paid off. Japan, one of the most persistent critics of the six French nuclear tests which ended on Jan. 27, immediately welcomed Chirac's announcement.

Government spokesman Seiroku Kajiyama declared, "we are pleased with this initiative which is a sign from France that it has started nuclear disarmament."

Mr. Kajiyama, who is also chief cabinet secretary, said the move to close a nuclear plant at Pierrelatte in the south of the country that enriches uranium for military purposes was a major step towards unblocking talks in Geneva for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Mr. Chirac emphasised that France was the first of the five official nuclear powers — the others are the United States, Russia, China and Britain — to take such a decision, but added that France already had "enough" stocks of fissile materials.

A high French official who asked not to be named said the move would oblige the other nuclear powers to reappraise their position on fissile materials and was aimed at unfreezing the CTBT negotiations, which have been blocked by positions adopted by China and India.

Mr. Chirac also announced other nuclear cuts which had been widely expected — the closure of the nuclear testing installations in French Polynesia, and the scrapping of the land-based component of the French nuclear deterrent.

He said the 13 strategic nuclear missiles in silos on the Albion Plateau in southeastern France would be scrapped along with 30 Hades short-range nuclear missiles which had been mothballed in 1992.

Mr. Chirac said the scrapping of the Hades, which could have been reactivated, was aimed at reassuring Germany, which felt threatened by the weapons, which have a range of only 350 kilometres.

But Mr. Chirac said the six nuclear tests had been carried out with "perfection" and had provided France with nuclear credibility "for 50 years." He added: "We are certain we possess a totally reliable nuclear deterrent," which would take the form of warheads carried on five strategic nuclear submarines and on planes.

Mr. Chirac's announcement of the closure of the fissile materials plant was his second major initiative aimed at securing CTBT.

Last year Mr. Chirac took other members of the nuclear club by surprise, proposing a "zero option," banning all nuclear tests, even those which were undetectable. The United States, Britain and Russia backed the proposal.

But since their resumption in January, the Geneva talks have snagged on positions adopted by New Delhi and Beijing.

India has demanded a straight ban on nuclear weapons and a calendar for their elimination. New Delhi has a nuclear military capability and carried out a nuclear test in 1974. Recently India was suspected by the U.S. of planning a new test which risked precipitating a nuclear arms race with Pakistan.

China also is opposed to the zero option and demands the right to stage nuclear tests.

CIA warns of worldwide security threats

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States faces a host of post-cold war security threats from nations and groups around the world, Central Intelligence Agency Director John Deutch warned Congress Thursday.

"We face, in the post-cold war era, new threats to our security. Prominent among these is the growth of international terrorism, drugs and crime," Mr. Deutch told the Senate Intelligence Committee.

"We have seen during the past years a steady growth in terrorism, both state-sponsored, for example, the Hizbollah, and from sub-national groups, such as the cult in Japan that released chemical agents in the subway system. In our view, these terrorist threats will continue to grow both against the United States and other nations."

"Free nations of the world are threatened by rogue states — Iran, Iraq, North Korea and Libya — that have built up significant military forces and seek to acquire weapons of mass destruction: nuclear, chemical and biological," he added.

Mr. Deutch said none of the threats was as serious as the one from the former Soviet Union, but that together they posed major challenges that showed the need for strong intelligence.

He also confirmed that the CIA uses American journalists as intelligence sources but only in rare circumstances when American lives are at stake.

"The policy says that we will not use American journalists except under very, very rare circumstances where we... would consider the information to be of such importance or the access to be of such tremendous importance to the interests of the United States and to American citizens that they would waive consideration and use an American journalist," he said.

Mr. Deutch said, as an example, that a journalist might be used who had special access to a group holding Americans hostage or which had weapons of mass destruction.

Committee Chairman Arlen Specter, Republican of Pennsylvania, asked Mr. Deutch to provide the committee with a more specific interpretation of the policy.

Mr. Deutch said the CIA and other U.S. intelligence agencies were closely watching developments in China, where a new generation of leaders was taking power and Russia, where he said democracy was fragile.

Major pushes to restart Ulster peace process in wake of bombings

LONDON (AFP) — Prime Minister John Major, under the gun to restart the bomb-damaged Northern Ireland peace process, was meeting Friday with U.S. envoy George Mitchell ahead of talks with key Ulster politicians.

Mr. Major's office said earlier that he and Irish counterpart John Bruton would hold a summit meeting on Ulster, probably early next week.

Mr. Mitchell met with Mr. Bruton and Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring

in Dublin late Thursday and said afterwards that U.S. President Bill Clinton had made no decision yet on granting a new visa to Gerry Adams, head of the Sinn Féin political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

"There is no matter pending before him for decision now," said Mr. Mitchell. "It is therefore, in my judgement, premature, speculative and not helpful in attempting to answer hypothetical questions which may arise in the future."

Jordan Times

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Haggle before May day

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Shimon Peres and his ruling Labour Party have once again come under attack from Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu and his colleagues, this time over the future of East Jerusalem. No doubt the Likud is looking right and left for ammunition to discredit Peres and his party now that the Knesset elections are only three months away. Last week, a fight brewed over even the thought of amending the election platform of the Labour Party in such a way as to delete the 1991 clause that rejected outright the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank. This time the haggle is over a report in Haaretz newspaper alleging that aides to Peres have been secretly negotiating with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), prior to the official final status talks. On both counts, the Israeli prime minister had to repudiate any intentions on his part either to allow the formation of a Palestinian state or surrender Arab Jerusalem to the PNA. Perhaps Peres' denial of persistent press reports about near agreement on these two thorny issues is associated with his bid not to appear too compromising with the Palestinians before the holding of the May elections. It must be remembered that Peres cannot afford to let the popularity gap between him and Netanyahu narrow, especially when the latter is continuously searching for cracks to launch scathing attacks on his rival.

These election tactics, though, should not prevent the Israelis from viewing the future of East Jerusalem or the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in an enlightened manner. No matter what the official line of both the Labour and Likud parties says on the issue of Jerusalem, the reality is that there are two Jerusalems belonging to two different cultures and ethnic groups cannot be overlooked. The sooner this fact is accepted the sooner would come the day when the vexing problem could be resolved. Besides, the Israeli voters should be the first to realise that as long as Jerusalem remains contested by two different peoples and even more faiths, it would remain a great impediment to regional peace. Common sense would dictate that reasonable accommodation between the two parties be arrived at as early as possible so that this peace can be completed and consolidated. Without agreement on East Jerusalem, the Middle East would remain threatened and ready to explode at any moment.

In theory at least, the Israeli voters would want to strike a durable settlement in this part of the world and not one that could be breached over an issue that is just as dear to the other side as it is to them. Come election time, both Likud and Labour constituencies should put true national interests over party politics and accept realities as they unfold before their eyes.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

MAHMOUD RIMAWI, a writer for Al Ra'i daily, expressed the view that the coming summit meeting between King Hussein, President Mubarak and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat is extremely important since it will be dedicated to discussing ways for supporting the Palestinians in their coming diplomatic battle with Israel over Jerusalem and the other issues that have been deferred until the final negotiations over a lasting settlement. Despite their involvement in the campaigns for the general elections in Israel Israeli government ministers have declared that they want the negotiations with the Palestinians to be held in May as scheduled, said the writer. Therefore, it is of real importance to pave the ground for the coming event and it is necessary to find a way for supporting the Palestinian stand in the final stage of the negotiations with the Israeli side said the writer. The battle of over Jerusalem, the fate of the Jewish settlements and the Palestinian refugees' question are expected to be fierce, especially as the Israelis are declaring their commitment to keep the settlements and to retain Jerusalem as their eternal united capital, he added. The writer said that Egypt, Jordan and the Palestine authority are directly concerned with the achievement of a lasting settlement in Palestine and the coming tripartite summit represents a manifestation of solidarity with the Palestinian people, needed ahead of the coming battle.

TAHER ADWAN, a writer for Al Dustour, called on Jordanians to back the health ministry's drive to conduct pre-marital laboratory tests, saying that the procedure has proved necessary to avoid complications in the future. It has been proved that children resulting from inter-breeding often have various forms of disabilities, said the writer. In order to avoid giving life to more handicapped children, couples planning marriage should not only take the required blood tests but also heed the advice to given to them by specialists who can warn about what they could expect in the future, demanded the writer. In order to have healthy children, families should refrain from arranging marriages among cousins and close relatives in order to guarantee that the inheritance of real estate remains safe within the family bounds, said the writer, adding that the Ministry of Health should not be satisfied with giving advice to couples but also enact a law making pre-marital testing mandatory for all Jordanians.

Jordanian Perspective

By Dr. Musa Keilani

Iran's long arm reaches the Gulf

The troubles in Bahrain have been found out now to be of Iranian making. The official statement coming from Manama spoke bluntly of how training was carried out in pro-Iranian Hizbollah camps in Lebanon, how advanced training took place in Qum and how Iranian intelligence officers gave their expertise in booby-trapped car explosives.

What happened in Bahrain is another manifestation of Iran's terror in the region which the dual-containment policy could not restrain.

For years Iran reiterated its determination to "export the revolution" by toppling the royal monarchies of the Arab World, including Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states and Jordan.

It is no longer a secret that Jordan became a target of Iranian violence since King Hussein signed in October 1994 a peace treaty with Israel. Reports from Bahrain refer to suicide-brigades organised by the Islamic Republic of Iran, each consisting of 2,000 men whose mission is "to resort to any means necessary to demolish and destroy" what the report terms "the reactionary rulers" of the Arab World. Each recruit to those brigades should "be ready to sacrifice his life and be willing to become a martyr" — to be one of the Shuhadaa "Al Hussein." The twelve training camps in Iran, it is reported, have many Palestinians, Sudanis, Bahrainis, Saudis, Qataris and some former Afghanis Arabs who had acquired war experience in Kabul.

The pro-Iranian Hizbollah in Lebanon has many training camps in southern Beirut where several Iraqis from Al-Da'wa Party supervise what many Gulf recruits need to know in the fields of ideological indoctrination or sabotage.

The leader of Lebanon's Hizbollah Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah was in Iran months ago where he described Arab heads of state, saying "they only claim to observe Islam."

Iran's occupation of three Arab islands in the Gulf constitutes a new foothold in Tehran's determination to achieve political expansion through direct military means or through creation of political trouble as in the case in Bahrain.

Hujjatol-Islam Hadi Al Mudarrissi met in Tehran few weeks ago with over 400 radical Shiite leaders from his hometown Manama as well as Dhahran, Qatif, the Eastern Province, Dubai and Lebanon. His call was for an overthrow of "secularist" Arab regimes and for a "restoration" of a Shiite dynasty which once, centuries ago, ruled Morocco, Syria, Palestine and Egypt where it built then Al-Azhar mosque to be the first Shiite university.

Mudarrissi, who is Bahraini, originally born in Jeddah, admitted that his aim was to establish an Iranian-style Islamic Republic in Bahrain. He had earlier organised an abortive coup d'état in 1981 through his clandestine Munazzamat Al Amal Al Islami based in Qom.

The Palestinian Hizbollah, headed by Colonel Ahmed Muhanna, had earlier announced its aim to establish an Iranian-Style Islamic Republic in Palestine.

It seems this export of Islamic revolution from Iran will target, for ideological motivations, all countries adjacent and surrounding Mecca and Jerusalem with the purpose of building another Soviet-like Iranian Union at the expense of all Muslims. The troubles in Bahrain are just the beginning of the implementation of a larger, sinister design long planned by Tehran.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Jordan's diplomacy to energise collective Arab action

Reviewed By Elia Nasrallah

THE MAIN commentaries in the local Arabic dailies last week focused attention on Jordan's diplomatic offensive spearheaded by His Majesty King Hussein at the Arab level. They also covered questions related to Israel's election campaign, the Palestine issue, domestic and pan-Arab affairs.

Taher Adwan, a writer for Al Dustour, hailed King Hussein's recent tour of Arab states and said the Jordanian diplomacy was clearly aimed at reviving pan-Arab solidarity.

Indeed the King's meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has resulted in agreement on a mini summit with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to chart ways for supporting the Palestinian people's national endeavours, said the writer.

He said that the successful tour seems to have paved the way for reviving collective Arab action vis-a-vis the challenges and the problems that face the nation.

Mahmoud Rimawi, a writer for Al Ra'i, agreed and said that the King's visits to Saudi Arabia and Egypt mainly concerned the reestablishment of pan-Arab solidarity and focused attention on means of providing support for the Palestinians.

The writer said that Jordanian diplomatic moves require backing from all Arab states, not only with regard to the Palestinians but also towards alleviating the sufferings of the Iraqi people and ending the embargo on this sister Arab state.

More coordination of efforts and more solidarity are needed if the Arab Nation is to fulfil its aspirations and safeguard national interests, he added.

Commenting on the Mubarak-Hussein talks last week, Hamadeh Faraaneh, a writer for Al Dustour, said that Jordan and Egypt are, more than other Arab states, concerned with achieving a comprehensive peace that would guarantee Palestinian rights.

Egypt and Jordan aim at helping the Palestinians regain their full rights and confront Israel's procrastination regarding implementation of agreements reached with the Palestini-

ans, said the writer.

The two countries are, like the Palestinians, concerned with a final settlement that would see an end to the Jewish settlements, the return of Arab Jerusalem to Arab sovereignty and the return of the Palestinian refugees to their homeland.

Orabi Rintawi, a writer for Al Dustour, expressed the view that the Palestinians are not in a strong position to regain their rights and lands on their own, stressing the need of Arab countries' backing to achieve the aspired goal.

Syria and other Arab states should end their reservations and join Egypt and Jordan in their efforts to support the Palestinian endeavours, said the writer.

The Jordanian-Egyptian moves to back the Palestinians, said the writer, are of paramount importance since they come on the eve of the start of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations over a final settlement, said the writer.

He said that the Palestinians will be in need of all possible backing from

ian lands and could resort to violent methods to achieve their goals.

The opposition Likud Party in Israel is trying to win the favour of the electorate by raising the question of the future of Jerusalem in party election campaigns, said Mohammad Kawash in Al Dustour.

The writer said that the Likud is dwelling on the future of Jerusalem demanding that the city remain Israel's eternal united capital, with no rights for the Arabs in it.

The Likud realises that the Labour Party was holding negotiations with the Palestinians over the fate of the city's Arab sector and therefore it is trying to embarrass the Labour Party's leaders and drive them towards declaring a different stand vis-a-vis this complicated issue and so lose the backing of the Israeli voters.

In short, the Jerusalem question is being used as a ploy by the two parties for purely election purposes, added the writer.

In the fight between Likud and Labour over

But, said the writer, the fight over Jerusalem as well as the other remaining important questions are far from being over as long as the Palestinians are clinging hard to their rights in their homeland.

The Palestinian leadership is bound by the Oslo agreements to amend the Palestinian charter and strike off the clause that calls for the destruction of the Jewish state, said Fahd Al Faneh, a writer for Al Ra'i.

Israel is expecting the Palestinian president to convene the Palestine National Council (PNC) in two months to approve the amendment or change the charter altogether, but it also realises that most PNC members living abroad do not support this idea and therefore a real technical problem is bound to crop up soon, said the writer.

For the amendment to happen, approval is required from the majority of the PNC members who could be called to hold their meeting inside or outside the Palestine self-rule areas, noted the writer.

He said it remains to be seen whether the opponents of the amendments can win the day or not; but if they do, the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations over the final phase of peace will be in jeopardy.

Mohammad Daoud, a writer for Al Dustour, said that there is a general feeling of optimism among the public over the government's moves to raise the ceiling of public freedoms and to stimulate economic activities and deal with the question of unemployment.

The private sector is bound to help the government deal with the numerous domestic questions that have plagued the country for so long, he said.

But, said the writer, the government should introduce further regulations and rules to enable the private sector to export more Jordanian products, open new markets and attract more investments which can in turn reduce unemployment which is responsible for poverty and many social ills.

The government, added the writer, is to be commended for its current efforts to restore strong ties with the Gulf states, a move which is bound to open these countries' markets for Jordanian goods.

Arabian Peninsula faces period of turmoil

By Patrick Rahir
Agence France-Presse

DUBAI — The oil and gas-rich Arabian Peninsula is going through its worst period of turmoil since the Gulf war to expel Iraq from Kuwait ended five years ago.

From the return of King Fahd to power in Saudi Arabia, to a failed coup in Qatar, political violence in Bahrain, and conflict in the Red Sea between Yemen and Eritrea, there has been one crisis after another in recent months.

King Fahd's return to power, in the middle of the Eid Al-Fitr holiday, has surprised diplomats in the region who thought he would take longer to recover from a stroke in November.

Few were willing to speculate on the political reasons for the king's decision to take back the reins of power in the world's richest oil-producing country so quickly from his half-brother, Crown Prince Abdullah, the acting ruler.

In Qatar, where the authorities put down a coup attempt Saturday, the emir, Sheikh Hamad Al-Thani, accused his father, the deposed former emir, Sheikh Khalifa, of using foreign mercenaries to try to take back power.

The former emir, in exile in the United Arab Emirates, insisted that the coup was a result of Qataris no longer wanting to be ruled by his usurping son, who seized power in June.

This family quarrel in an emirate of no more than 500,000 people would be of no import if Qatar did not have the world's third largest reserves of natural gas. It also has wider implications because the deposed emir controls most of his country's finances via bank accounts in Switzerland.

In the neighbouring archipelago of Bahrain, the Sunni Muslim-led authorities have been trying to put down a wave of political unrest orchestrated by opposition leaders among the country's Shiite majority since December 1994.

Protestors demanding political and social reforms including the restitution of parliament and the constitution, suspended since 1975, have begun a new phase of violence, planting bombs and burning buildings.

Other Gulf nations, worried by the prospect of unrest in their countries involving Shiites encouraged by Iran, have closed ranks behind the Bahraini government. All except Qatar, which fell out with other members of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council over a key appointment to the organisation and then broadcast interviews with exiled Bahraini opposition figures.

Bahrain, like Iraq across the Gulf, is the

only country in the peninsula to have a Shiite majority, but Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in particular are concerned about the unrest spreading with Iranian ideology.

In November, the Saudi authorities suffered their first bombing, seven people, including five Americans, died in the attack in central Riyadh.

Iraq, using political repression, has been able to contain its Shiite majority and President Saddam Hussein, fortified by the return this week of key members of his family from exile in Amman, has retained his grip on power.

"The prospect of Iraq returning to the oil market has created uncertainty in many Gulf countries which depend on oil revenues."

The country, which has suffered under U.N. sanctions since its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, hopes to be able to negotiate shortly an agreement to resume limited sales of oil in return for food and medicine.

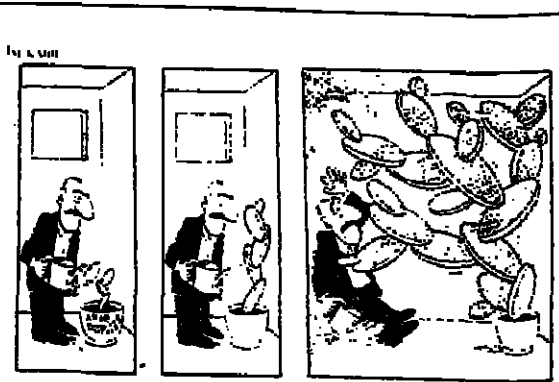
The prospect of Iraq returning to the oil market has created uncertainty in many Gulf countries which depend on oil revenues. If Baghdad secures an agreement with the U.N., it would hope to sell 700,000 barrels per day of oil, forcing prices down and affecting the Organisation Of Petroleum Exporting Countries' quotas.

Since 1990, Iraq's production has been replaced by Saudi crude but the government in Riyadh has shown no sign of wanting to reduce its exports.

Amid all this uncertainty, a dispute over a strategic chain of Red Sea islands has been rumbling on at the southern end of the peninsula between Yemen and Eritrea.

Yemen, which emerged from a bloody civil war in 1994, is trying to recover through mediation the island of Hanish Al-Kebir (greater Hanish) which Eritrean forces occupied on Dec. 18 after three days of fighting.

But despite mediation by France, Egypt and Ethiopia, the two sides have warned that the dispute may yet be resolved in war.



Swedish city, companies fight Old cover story sets off alarm bells

By Abigail Schmetz
Reuters

GOTHENBURG, Sweden — When a Swedish transport company decided to clean up the image it had acquired as an environmental menace, it homed in on idlyres, which were leaving dangerous oils in their wake.

Although no alternatives were then available, Bilspedition asked tyre manufacturers to come up with a better product. With an estimated 100,000 wheels on the road at any time, suppliers could not ignore the request.

"We had some angry responses but we also had Japanese businessmen on our doorstep, ready to do business," said Asa Lindell Bystrom, the company's director of public and environmental affairs.

Today, Bilspedition recommends environmentally-friendly driving and service practices, as well as the greatest detergents, fuels, lubricants and tyres on the market to its hauliers.

The example is one of several success stories for environmental activists in this wet coast port who are working with — rather than against — companies to produce healthier and safer practices without having to wait for legislation.

Backed by an innovative city council which encourages companies to look in their own backyards for solutions, local authorities have joined forces with businesses in an uncommon alliance.

"Instead of saying 'you

must do this,' we have decided to cooperate. There are two actors, authorities and industry, when developing new solutions," said Goran Varmby of the city of Gothenburg's Environmental Strategy Office.

City Councillor Kerstin Svenson said both sides benefited from the relationship. Projects are often financed jointly by companies and local government.

"It's a circle of good things. We don't need the money back in the city's cash flow. For me, as a politician, it's important to have the return in the form of more jobs and revenue from income taxes," Ms. Svenson told Reuters.

"When the city is taking part in these projects, it gives it credibility," Svenson added. "The companies don't get more regulations, they get help," she said.

Such cooperation was responsible for prompting vehicle maker Volvo, also based in Gothenburg, to replace harmful glues with more environmentally-sound alternatives.

"By using the cleaner glues, Volvo saved 10 to 15 million crowns (\$1.4 to \$2.1 million) on a burning and filter system it would have had to build," Mr. Varmby said. "They are keen to be good guys because the city buys a lot from them," he added.

The air quality for residents has also improved considerably since Volvo, among others, cleaned up emissions from their plants. "Everything that was negative for Gothenburg was negative for Volvo, too," Mr. Varmby said.

Smaller companies which are researching new green products say the government's help, such as tax breaks, often determines whether their products survive or not.

Aspen Petroleum, which says it has developed a blend of diesel and ethanol called diesohol 12 which is cleaner than anything presently available, says its product costs more per litre than dirtier alternatives.

"If the government doesn't find a way to support it, it won't survive the market," Aspen's President Jan Lindblad said.

Companies often put their necks on the line when looking into new green products. But for others, being a step ahead of competitors pays off.

"As a transportation company, it's a matter of survival," said Jan-Olof Amas, managing director of Transportbransle.

Amas' company is presently testing Aspen's diesohol among some of his truck drivers, who say they suffer fewer headaches since using cleaner fuel.

"We have to be on the frontline. It's our aim to be ahead of legislation, otherwise we'll be surprised by it," Mr. Amas said.

Asked about the return on the investment needed to test the new products, Mr. Amas said environmental-minded industrialists had to take a long-term view.

"We're not expecting it to come back in three years or five years, but probably in 10. We have to ask ourselves what would happen if we had done nothing," Mr. Amas told Reuters.

Not all projects have been successful. One taxi fleet temporarily tested Aspen's cleaner gasoline, called Aspen city, telling customers it could offer a cleaner ride.

Money talks, however, and the project failed because customers were not willing to pay higher fares than the cabs using ordinary fuel.

"They got a lot of publicity and goodwill from it. But few people are willing to pay more for just a better global environment," Aspen's Lindblad said.

Companies agree a high profile on environmental issues is good for business.

"In the future I don't think there will be a place for companies not working on these issues," said Mr. Bystrom of Bilspedition.

"There is no oil company today that dares be connected to oil spills. It's quite different now than it was a number of years ago, when people tried to get around rules," said Nils Birgander, general manager at Gothenburg port's oil terminal.

Through a tighter cleaning system, the port has managed to cut the amount of refined petroleum products it dumps into the sea from 3.5 tonnes in 1985 to less than half a tonne in 1994.

Still, there is more to be done, activists say. "A lot remains to be done. But there is hope — there is a will and a commitment today that wasn't there five or 10 years ago," said Jakob Lagercrantz of environmental consultant firm Ecoplan.

By Daniel Schorr

WASHINGTON — It was only one line in a report by a Council on Foreign Relations task force, titled "Making Intelligence Smarter: The Future of U.S. Intelligence." The line was: "At a minimum, a fresh look should be taken at limits on the uses of non-official 'covers' for hiding and protecting those involved in clandestine activities." Just one line, but it rang a lot of bells among veteran CIA watchers.

I asked the project director, Richard Haass, a former national security assistant to President George Bush, what he had in mind by "non-official covers."

He said it was time at least to consider lifting restrictions on CIA agents posing as correspondents and clergy.

Mr. Haass appeared not to be aware of the history behind those restrictions. In 1976, I reported on CBS that, under an arrangement between the CIA and CBS Chairman William S. Paley, two agents in Stockholm and in Cairo in the 1950s had been given CBS credentials and, to maintain their cover, actually reported on the air as CBS correspondents.

The Senate Intelligence Committee, under Frank Church, found that about 50 American journalists had, at one time or another, been on the CIA payroll. It released no names, which started lots of rumours.

The journalist Sam Jaffe said the CIA had arranged for CBS to send him to Moscow to cover the trial of Gary Powers, the pilot of the U-2 spy plane shot down over the Soviet Union in 1960. Mr. Jaffe also said he had a list of other journalists with CIA connections, including Walter Cronkite. That was furiously denied by Mr. Cronkite.

What led to confusion was the habit of some CIA station chiefs of puffing themselves up in their reports by referring to correspondents as "sources" on the basis of no more than a few casual conversations. The correspondents' names then went into agency files. Nonetheless, the knowledge that some reporters had been paid agents spread a stain over the whole profession.

Responding to the Senate report, CIA Director George Bush issued a directive saying: "The CIA will not enter into any paid or contractual relationship

with any full-time or part-time news correspondent accredited by any United States news service, newspaper, periodical, radio or television network or station."

When Stansfield Turner, President Jimmy Carter's CIA director, was asked for a broader public statement banning the use of journalists, he said that to prohibit any kind of contact at all between the press and the CIA "would belie that we are all working for the good of our country."

Given that history, and the continuing ambiguity, the Soviets found it easy to accuse American journalists of being spies when they attracted the authorities' unfavourable attention. In 1957, as CBS correspondent in Moscow, I was briefly arrested and accused of taking spy pictures because my cameraman was photographing a department store. That was the end of my Moscow career.

But it could have been worse. In 1986, when the KGB wanted an American to exchange for a Soviet spy arrested in New York, they jailed Nicholas Daniloff of U.S. News & World Report and accused him of being a CIA spy.

Ridiculous to anyone who knew Nick Daniloff. But the CIA, by its past practice, made all American foreign correspondents suspect.

And now comes the Council on Foreign Relations task force, with members from the national security world like Brent Scowcroft and the former CIA Deputy Director Richard Kerr, but also people from the world of journalism like the former Time editor Henry Grunwald and the former New York Times columnist Leslie Gelb. And they all sign onto a report with that line about taking a fresh look at giving non-official cover to CIA agents.

So the result is that the next generation of foreign correspondents and ministers of the cloth will be vulnerable to some unfriendly government that says: "We know from the record that the CIA uses pastors and press people as cover for its nefarious activities. So you must be one."

The writer is a senior news analyst for national Public Radio. This article is reprinted from The Washington Post.

Spain tries to draw bigger spending tourists

By Joelle Diderich
Reuters

MADRID — Spain is hoping to entice tourists away from its crowded beaches and draw them to its national parks and monuments in the hope they will be more extravagant.

It has launched a three-year plan to revamp its tourist industry, making sure the bloated "sun and sand" holiday market doesn't grow any more and looking to "quality" tourism for other ways to make money.

A highly successful 1995 season has helped Spain overtake the United States to become the world's second most popular tourist destination after France, but the tourism ministry hopes for only modest growth this year.

"We understand that in the future, the Spanish high-season holiday must not grow in volume but we must promote and improve the quality of our offer," Miguel Gongora, secretary general for tourism, told Reuters.

Over 45 million tourists visited Spain in 1995, up four per cent on the previous year, compared with France's 60 million, recent figures from the World Tourism Organisation

(WTO) show. Tourism revenue makes up nine per cent of Spain's gross domestic product and accounts for 11 per cent of jobs.

Although tourist numbers grew in 1995, they remained stable in the peak July-August period and only increased in the pre- and post-season months, gongora says.

This is welcome news at the ministry, which hopes tourist numbers will grow a sustainable one per cent in 1996.

The problem it now faces is how to maintain growth in revenue which reached \$25 billion in 1995, up 15 per cent on 1994 and the fourth highest in the world, according to WTO figures.

Tourist officials predict that 1996 will be difficult as the economic outlook in many European countries bleakens.

"Our main clients are having economic and social problems," says Lluís Alegre, spokesman for the Catalan Tourism Council. "In Germany, they are starting to talk about unemployment and the French had a long strike which psychologically has a big effect on vacations."

The recent rise in the peseta is also depressing trade, says Mr. Alegre.

wistfully recalling the peseta devaluations of 1993 and 1995 which boosted the latest spurt of growth.

Traditional big tourist destinations have realised volume can't grow forever and are trying to raise the amount of money each tourist spends, according to a WTO official in Madrid. Spain hopes its 78 paradors, state-owned inns usually situated in buildings of historical or architectural worth, will contribute a larger slice to profits.

The paradors, which include mediaeval cloisters and an eighth century Arab castle, generated close to \$200 million in revenues last year and a pre-tax profit of nearly \$9 million.

Eduardo Moreno, chairman of the company which runs the paradors, recently said he planned to lift profits by 70 per cent this year and productivity by 20 per cent.

On a broader scale, the tourism ministry hopes its plan, which includes quality, training and new products, will be the key to making tourism both profitable and sustainable.

In the Balearic Islands, the regional government is campaigning to improve all services, from renovating hotels to upgrading roads

and creating nature reserves.

Its latest measure, "Plan Q", aims to inspect and grade hotels for service levels.

"The idea was to give these zones a fresh coat of paint," says Juan Carlos Alia, head of promotions at Ibatour, which promotes Balearic tourism under the government's auspices.

He is aware that getting customers to spend more will be hard, as many of them are on low-budget package tours.

"Of course, the eight million tourists who come here every year can't all be millionaires. But with the improvements in services, quality and infrastructure, a hotel owner can ask for a reasonable price from tour operators."

Aware that there is a strong market among young people for budget holidays with abundant cheap bars and discos, the tourism ministry is careful to point out that quality doesn't simply mean herding everyone into museums for a dose of culture.

To Gongora, quality tourism means that holidays live up 100 per cent to their advertising and every tourist believes he got exactly what was promised in the brochure.

Paris restaurant with good looks and a past is 100

By Iritia Arieff
Reuters

PARIS — Charrier, an architectural gem and the first restaurant in Paris created expressly for the working class this year celebrates a century of good French cooking at modest prices.

Opened in 1896 by Camille Charrier, it draws Parisians and tourists in droves to admire its authentic bell époque decor and boisterous atmosphere that clients lovingly compare to that of a railway station.

The gaudy restaurant seats 300 a time, and typically manages to dish out 1,200 meals a day by offering customers fast service and leaving it to them to add up their bills.

"We are not celebrating our 100th birthday, but the start of our second hundred years," Manager Daniel Lemaire said proudly in an interview.

Asked why the restaurant has been such a success, he does not hesitate: "One hundred years in the same location, with the same decor and the same business," he told Reuters. "This establishment was created to be a restaurant for working people, and it has remained just that. That's the essential."

Charrier owed its early success to the use of cuts of meat that no one else wanted. It initially served only beef broth and beef stew.

The economics were simple — take the humblest and cheapest cuts of meat and stew them until tender.

Voilà an unromantic shin of beef becomes a "pot au feu".

A century later, the cook-

ing is more ambitious and its customers adore it as much for its unconventional style as for its prices or what they eat.

Waiters are pushy, lone customers are seated next to total strangers, and there is lots of noise in contrast to the reverent atmosphere at more conventional French restaurants.

"People here get to know one another. After a meal, a client might find himself going out for a drink with someone he just met at lunch. In our dining room there is a constant exchange between the social classes and the generations," Mr. Lemaire said.

"Among our clientele are people from seven to 70 years old, from street sweepers to corporate chairmen. We are a true melting pot," he said.

Charrier is in practically every tourist guidebook. But most clients are Parisians who work or shop in the neighbourhood.

"Many people don't like Charrier because it's so noisy and the waiters are occasionally rude, so I don't suggest coming here when I'm part of a group. But when I'm by myself, it's my regular dining room," said a neighbourhood businesswoman who would identify herself only as Madame Riou.

"When I'm in Paris, it's my headquarters," said an out-of-town businessman, who quietly read a book amidst the bustle while laying into a trout planter.

The decor has changed little since Charrier opened at 7, Rue du Faubourg-Montmartre in Paris's Ninth District. It was classified as a historic monument

in 1989.

An ageing neon sign marks the unpretentious entrance, concealed in a courtyard away from the street.

The front door is covered with guidebook stickers. But stepping through it is like stepping into the last century.

The dining room is huge. Its walls are lined with dark wood and towering mirrors and its enormously high ceiling showcases an oversized skylight at its centre.

Dramatic clusters of lighted glass globes hang down from the ceiling on brass rods, and polished brass hat-racks run along the rows of tables over diners' heads.

An enormous piece of wooden furniture, resembling a giant dresser with dozens of tiny drawers, was used by regular customers until 1948 to store their napkins between meals.

They were given clean napkins every Monday, and turned them in for washing on Fridays.

Today, the napkins are paper.

The menu is considerably more ambitious though still short of gourmet. The average bill for a three-course meal is 73 francs (\$14.50), and a small pitcher of the house wine to wash it all down is just nine francs (\$1.80).

On a recent visit, a saute d'agneau Provencale with pommes rissoles at 40 francs (\$8), turned out to be a sizeable serving of meaty lamb ribs in a rich brown sauce accompanied by stewed tomatoes and tiny roasted whole potatoes.

The potatoes tasted as good as they looked but the

lamb was tough and the plate arrived at the table lukewarm.

A lovely raspberry tart at 23 francs (\$4.60) was delicious but so cold from being stored in a refrigerator that it was difficult to set one's teeth into.

The service is brusque but highly efficient, as waiters wearing black waistcoats and long white aprons race around the dining room in a delicate but frantic ballet, performing intricate manoeuvres to avoid collisions with one another.

When Charrier opened, its tables were covered with linen cloths. These days, there's still a pink and white linen covering, but it is in turn covered by thick paper.

Waiters record the orders directly on a corner of the paper, and it is a house tradition that a bill is presented only if a customer insists.

Instead, customers simply add up their totals right on the paper and leave a cheque or the exact sum as they leave.

During its first 100 years, the restaurant has had just three owners — Mr. Charrier, then a Mr. Francon, who bought it in 1930 and then Rene Lemaire, who acquired Charrier in 1945.

Rene, 84, has now turned its management over to his son Daniel though he continues to eat at Charrier most days.

Famous customers have included Italian film actor Marcello Mastroianni, French rock singer Johnny Hallyday and legendary cabaret singer Edith Piaf, who "used to come all the time," said Daniel Lemaire.

Jordan had no say in Kamel's decision

(Continued from page 1) conspiracy against Iraq. God forbid, then one of the ways to implement this conspiracy would have been to support Gen. Kamel."

Jordan's position was clear, Dr. Khasawneh said. It sought to ease the Iraqi people's suffering.

"What happens in Iraq concerns us, as it concerns all the countries of the region," He stressed that Jordan had never been a base for

conspiracies against other Arab countries.

"Jordan's policy is clear. It is based on non-intervention in the international affairs of other countries."

Jordan supports Iraq's territorial integrity and unity, but "we cannot at the same time condone what is happening in Iraq, particularly in relation to human rights violations."

Commenting on the return of Gen. Kamel to Iraq,

Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee at the Lower House of Parliament Fawzi Tu'meh said Gen. Kamel had left Jordan by his own volition, as he did when he came to Jordan. He stressed that Jordan had no interest in giving Gen. Kamel or any one else seeking political asylum in Jordan, any bigger role.

In interview with MBC on Nov. 6, 1995, Gen. Kamel dismissed as absurd any notion that his defection to Jordan was a ploy, plotted by him, President Saddam Hussein and members of their family.

Saleh Al Kallab, a columnist at Al Dustour, said the return of Gen. Kamel and his family has relieved Jordan from a heavy security and political burden which it shouldered for almost six months. With the departure of Gen. Kamel, Jordan has now more room to open dialogue with Iraqi opposition and to maintain its relations with the Iraqi regime.

Qatar calls urgent GCC meeting

(Continued from page 1) could destabilise the whole region.

"We have noticed no interest by the GCC countries concerning the serious events in Doha, which reflects a certain desire by these countries not to deal with Qatar as a member of the council," Al Watan newspaper said.

"The GCC should not forget that the failed coup d'etat in Qatar represents a threat to all other members of the council," the paper added.

Oman is the only country in the GCC, which also groups Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, to have reacted officially denouncing the coup attempt. Relations between Qatar and other GCC members

have been strained since the council's last summit in December in Muscat when Doha walked out in protest at the choice of a new secretary general of the group.

The official Omani news agency ONA said Wednesday that urgent consultations were underway between GCC members to hold the special meeting to discuss the coup attempt.

Qatar has accused the exiled Emir Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani of being behind the plot to seize back power from his son Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani.

Sheikh Khalifa has lived in exile since being overthrown last year and set up residence in Abu Dhabi in December, from where he has toured the Gulf seeking to drum up support for a return to power.

But he has denied any involvement in the coup, while officials in Doha have also pointed an accusing finger at Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. Qatar, a tiny Gulf sheikhdom with a population of around 500,000, is a small OPEC oil producer with an output of 400,000 barrels per day.

But it has the third largest gas reserves in the world, estimated at 7.1 trillion cubic metres, and has been involved in multi-billion-dollar projects to develop them with foreign partners.

On Tuesday Qatar said it had arrested 100 people in connection with the "conspiracy, backed by foreign sides to destabilise the stability and security."

It said the arrested people were supporters of the former Emir.

One diplomat said: "As long as there is a solid Western and especially American support behind Sheikh Hamad, nothing can alter the regime."

Foreign companies involved in multi-billion-dollar projects to exploit Qatar's oil and huge gas wealth are "carefully" watching the political situation "but we do not see any serious threat to stability," said the chief executive of an oil firm.

Qatari sources close to official thinking told Reuters earlier this month the former Emir would be unable to topple his son from within but would need foreign military intervention to regain power — an unlikely move in Doha's view.

Israel, Syria making efforts

(Continued from page 12)

the region's Arab states, he observed.

The regional economic summit in Casablanca and Amman also helped Israel develop its economic relations within the Middle East, the Israeli ambassador said. The fact that economic summits are now being planned

for Cairo, Qatar and possibly Tunisia shows the extent to which the regional landscape has changed. Looking to the future, Mr. Rabinovich evoked the day when the countries of the Middle East might begin conducting their affairs in concert, somewhat like Europe does.

Israeli army, Palestinian

(Continued from page 12)

means of communication or transportation.

Mr. Abu Leileh said some 200 empty bullet cartridges were found afterwards, from weapons used by both sides.

Israel opened its borders with the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to Palestinians on

Friday after a 10-day closure.

Most Israeli troops withdrew from the Gaza Strip in 1994 under terms of the Israel-PLO peace deal that launched Palestinian self-rule. Some soldiers still protect Jewish settlements in the strip and patrol jointly with Palestinian police.

Arab Gulf states, EU close to accord on oil tax

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states and the European Union (EU) have made headway in attempts to end a dispute over a controversial oil tax that could hurt regional economies, a Gulf Arab official said Friday.

Mushtaq Saleh, ambassador of the six-state Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to the Brussels-based EU, said the two sides had held several meetings on the carbon tax and more talks would take place this month.

He told the United Arab Emirates (UAE) semi-official daily Al Itihad that economic and financial experts from the two strong commercial partners had finalized a report on a "constructive" bilateral relationship.

"The report includes positive aspects for laying down a common ground for the relations between the GCC and the EU," he said. "During our meetings, we felt that the EU is trying to ease the impact of the carbon tax after member states failed to reach a consensus on it."

The EU has proposed a tax on \$3 on each imported barrel of oil as from 1993, to rise gradually to \$10 by the year 2000.

But member states have failed to reach a collective agreement on the project, leaving each member to take its own decision on the tax. GCC states have repeatedly voiced concern over the tax on the grounds it will slow

down growth in oil demand and depress their income, already slashed to nearly one third from its 1980 level due to weak crude prices.

The EU has defended the tax as an environmental measure aimed at curbing the emission of carbon dioxide, blamed for global warming. But GCC countries and other oil producers have contended industrial nations were only seeking additional revenues as crude oil is already heavily taxed there.

According to Mr. Saleh, oil taxes in most major consumer states have jumped from only \$7.5 during the 1970s to around \$37 currently.

He said oil producers were now earning an average 17 cent per dollar from the sale of oil while 60 cents were earned by the governments in consumer countries and the rest were in storage and shipping costs.

"Any additional taxes on oil, which is already heavily taxed, simply means a further decline in our income. This will adversely affect our purchasing power and our investment in oil production and technology, and consequently this will affect the social conditions in our countries," Mr. Saleh said.

GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the UAE — produce around 13 million barrels per day (b/d) of oil, accounting for nearly one fifth of the world's total crude supplies.

Oil exports provide more

than 80 per cent of their total earnings and this has made their economies highly vulnerable to crude price fluctuations.

GCC's annual oil export revenues have averaged around \$70 billion over the past five years, nearly one third of their 1980 level. But in real terms, their value does not exceed 15 per cent due to global inflation and the decline in the U.S. dollar, the official price of crude.

Mr. Saleh said GCC states, which control around 45 per cent of the world's total proven oil reserves, were the fifth biggest trade partner of the EU and supplied it with more than 25 per cent of its oil imports.

He said the EU was benefiting from its relationship with the GCC countries, in an apparent reference to the large surplus in its trade balance with them, estimated at more than \$10 billion in 1994. This is in contrast with the situation in early 1980s, when it suffered from deficit of over \$30 billion as a result of high oil prices and lower exports to the Gulf alliance.

"We in the Gulf look at the EU as a strategic economic partner. They are gaining strength as they were only 12 members when we reached an economic pact with them in 1988 and they are now 15 members," Mr. Saleh said. "The door is still open for more states to join the EU, which could reach 32 members."

Yeltsin warns government over social policy

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin, saying people's patience with reforms was at an end, said Friday the government could be replaced if it failed to ease the pain of the transition to a market economy.

"The government will either carry out its duty to defend the social and economic rights of people or this will be done by another government," Mr. Yeltsin said in his annual "state of the nation" address to a joint session of parliament.

Looking resolute and showing no signs of the heart problems he suffered last year, Mr. Yeltsin, 65, said ordinary Russians had been asked to make sacrifices in the name of reform but could take no more.

"We called on people for a long time to tighten their

belts, and people did this, but their patience is exhausted," Mr. Yeltsin said in the 50-minute speech, which Russian television broadcast live from the Kremlin.

"Our task is to develop a market and at the same time to reduce the (social) cost of this process," he added.

The speech was based on a longer written report which promised to continue economic reforms but also said the below "ordinary" Russians should be "softened."

Mr. Yeltsin's speech appeared designed to meet the challenge of the resurgent Communist Party in the presidential poll, the Communists made big gains in a parliamentary election on Dec. 17 because of discontent with reforms.

Mr. Yeltsin said in his

speech that Russia had been obliged to take a tough position on transforming its economy after decades of Communist rule. But he said there was a line "beyond which tiredness and discontent can overcome hope."

"The government which is focusing on financial stabilization has forgotten about people living on wages and pensions," Mr. Yeltsin said. "If we do not guarantee the social and economic rights of the people, if financial instability starts, everything may be lost and we will be thrown back," he pointed out.

Mr. Yeltsin did not make clear what he would do to soften the blow of the Western-style reforms, which have increased hardships for ordinary Russians.

Clinton reappoints Greenspan, fills two other Fed vacancies

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton reappointed Alan Greenspan chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed) Board, sending a message that federal monetary policy will continue its present moderate course.

Mr. Clinton Thursday also filled two other vacancies on the seven-member board. Alice Rivlin, head of the White House budget office, was named vice chairman, and Washington University macro-economist Laurence Meyer was nominated to the other vacant seat.

Mr. Clinton said he was confident the appointments would now be confirmed in the U.S. Senate.

A 69-year-old Republican first named to the independent central bank board by former president Ronald Reagan in 1987, Mr. Greenspan was nominated for a third four-year term.

"He has worked with our administration to safeguard the stability of global economic markets," Mr. Clinton said of Mr. Greenspan.

"But more importantly, his decisions have helped us work toward sustained economic growth," he added.

Mr. Clinton's appointments are interpreted by economists and Fed-watchers as a sign that federal monetary policy will not significantly change.

Republican Senator Alfonse D'Amato, chairman of the Banking Committee, said he "sees no impediments" to prompt Senate confirmation of all three nominees.

Republican Senator Connie Mack, chairman of the Joint Economic Committee, said he would have some questions for the three at their confirmation hearing, but added, "I am favourably inclined."

The Federal Reserve Board is a major player in the U.S. economy, as it determines the availability of credit in the system through the

federal funds target rate.

The rate, charged by banks that make short-term loans among themselves, affects interest rates generally throughout the economy.

While Mr. Greenspan has shown himself to be partial to moderate expansion, unlike Mr. Clinton who favours more vigorous growth, analysts here had predicted the president would stick with the chairman to avoid upsetting markets in an election year.

Both Ms. Rivlin, 64, who has held several government posts in a professional career that began in 1957, and Mr. Meyer, 51, are said by associates to be "middle-of-the-road" in their economic convictions.

Dana Johnson, managing director of the Research Group at First Chicago Capital Markets Inc., said both appointees were "excellent economists... Rivlin knows how to navigate through political sensitivities, and Meyer is such a superb economist that he will fit into the economic dialogue at the Fed."

Mr. Rivlin, currently head of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), has been a fierce opponent of budget deficits and has earned a reputation for telling her political superiors that spending plans are excessive.

Mr. Clinton described her as "one of our nation's foremost experts on how to keep our economy growing."

"She has been my strong right arm as we have cut wasteful spending and moved toward a balanced budget," he said, adding, "She always calls it as she sees it."

David Resler, chief economist at Nomura Securities International and a Fed watcher, called Ms. Rivlin "the most accomplished woman policymaker of the last 20 years, and she certainly has the credentials necessary and requisite to do a creditable job as a member of

the board."

Ms. Rivlin will replace Alan Blinder, who resigned his seat on the board last month to return to Princeton University.

Mr. Clinton hailed Mr. Meyer as an economic forecaster whose "judgement and experience will serve our nation well."

"His economic forecasts are closely listened to at both the OMB and the CBO (the Congressional Budget Office)," Mr. Clinton declared.

"That is no small feat," he said, referring to disputes with the Republican-controlled Congress on the overall picture of the economy and its prospects for growth.

Mr. Resler said Mr. Meyer, who would replace Boston banker John LaWare, who resigned last April, is a strong choice. "If he couldn't pick me, I'd rather he'd pick Larry than anyone else," said Mr. Resler, a longtime friend of Mr. Meyer.

Independent economists have said repeatedly that the U.S. economy is currently slowing, a development that in an election year could prove troublesome for the administration.

Mr. Clinton last week made little secret of his frustration with the Federal Reserve, suggesting its preoccupation with inflation may have prevented it from allowing the economy to grow faster than the 2.5 per cent expansion it has averaged in the last three years.

The administration is predicting growth of 2.2 per cent this year. "Our objective should be to achieve maximum sustainable growth consistent with not letting inflation get out of hand," Mr. Clinton said.

Buchanan defies economic theory, political tradition

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Pat Buchanan, the feisty commentator who is now the Republican Party's presidential frontrunner, is riding a wave of popular angst and anger, as workers fear for their futures while corporations rake in record profits.

Buchanan's panacea? A figurative giant fence around the borders of the United States to keep out immigrants, coupled with stiff tariffs on imports to protect American workers from foreign competition.

He would slap duties of 10 per cent on imports from Japan and 40 per cent on those from China.

He would impose what he calls "social tariffs" on goods from developing nations, pull the United States out of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the World Trade Organisation and declare a five-year moratorium on legal immigration.

"We speak for a generation of Americans that does not apologise for the fact that we are going to control America's borders. We do not apologise for the fact that we will take control of our own destiny," Mr. Buchanan thundered after scoring a shock win in the New Hampshire Republican primary.

From New Hampshire Mr. Buchanan moved on to South Carolina, where he asked in a television interview: "How in heaven's name could they go for these trade deals down here in Carolina when you see one textile mill after another shutting down?"

Mr. Buchanan's views have been dismissed by most publicly quoted economists as simplistic and wrong.

It is precisely because the United States has embraced free trade that "our economy has grown faster and has been able to create jobs," insisted Joseph Stiglitz, chairman of Mr. Clinton's Council of Economic Advisors.

"The economic data shows that competing, not retreating, really works. There is not a single respectable economist who would subscribe to those kinds of theories," he stressed.

Mr. Stiglitz said the administration had found jobs dependent on merchandise exports pay 13 per cent more than the national average.

"Economically, America needs the jobs that will come with increasing penetration of the world economy," wrote Jeffrey Garten, dean of the Yale University School of Management, in the Wall Street Journal.

"It could see more than 16 million people employed in the export sector by the end of the decade — double the number of 1990 — if current trends continue," he pointed out.

Mr. Buchanan nonetheless gets a hearing at Global Trade Watch, an organisation launched by businessman rights activist Raul Nader, where deputy director Chris McGinnis noted: "That's a word because these trade agreements aren't delivering what they promised."

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1996
By Thomas S. Plerson, Astrologer, Carol Wright, Astrological Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You have excellent chances just now to advance today, so make use of them. Accept suggestions of others for help with a new project.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Study intently systems which can help you to advance today in your career. Do something to brighten the one you love with some unexpected surprise.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Having fun with those whose ideas differ from yours can be educational and informative if you listen quietly so be prepared to learn something new.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You have other talents from which you can profit, so use them and have an added income today. Today is the day to prepare for projects which must be completed.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Get some special talent developed and make a big impression on others. Contact one today who can be of a great help for any new activities.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) It is important you have a family discussion this morning so that you can coordinate your efforts much better in the direction you wish to take.

LIBRA: (September 22 to October 21) You can express yourself very well today and can make big headway in dealing with others. Make important visits and calls upon those of great influence.

SCORPIO: (October 22 to November 21) This is a good day to analyse your assets accurately and know how to add to them intelligently. Be happy with family activities with loved ones this evening.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Plan how to go after your aims in a positive way today and gain them, especially personal ones. Dress appropriately for important occasions.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 21) Try to spend as much time today as you can with a close tie and show much affection. Make a better plan for your activities today.

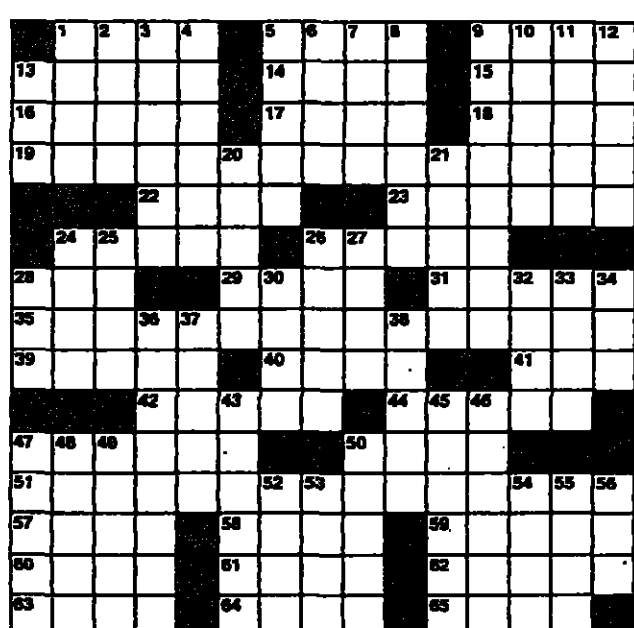
AQUARIUS: (January 22 to February 21) You understand what is expected of you by your friends and can try to please them more. Get your home heater and more charming today for unexpected guests.

PISCES: (February 22 to March 21) Talk your ideas over today with those who control your affairs and show them that they can be profitable to you and them for the future.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Onyx

THE Daily Crossword by Richard Thomas

- ACROSS
1 Baseball VPs
5 Luminox
9 Actor Johnny
13 Chameleon kin
14 Gad
15 Plink leap
16 Kind of vote
17 In balance
18 — morgana
19 Foot
22 Small combo
23 Honk
24 Bin kin
26 Moola
28 — king
29 Libertine
31 Alaska city
35 Yard
39 U.S. president
40 Racetrack transactions
41 Small amount
42 Full of froth
44 Certain
47 Canopy
50 Trailer
51 Mile
57 Charley's —
58 Chinese border river
59 Use a glacierium
60 Hay or joy end
61 Vein site
62 Burstyn or
63 Fashionable
64 Hotchpotch
65 Ruby and Sandra



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Tuesday's puzzle solved

DOWN
1 Golden Rule word
2 Satiric Sahl
3 Nebraska river
4 Seamstress, e.g.
5 Doctrine
6 Kind of feast
7 Finished
8 Stand for
9 Plant with yellow flowers
10 Glorify
11 Part of a corolla
12 — tectonics (branch of geology)
13 Residue
20 Part of TNT
21 Criticize
24 Supply with too many sweets
25 Winnings
26 Actor Gary of Texas
27 Geom. shape
28 Take steps
30 Poet's peepers
32 So long
33 Knot on a tree
34 Tack on
36 Utters anew
37 More loyal
38 Bone: pref.
43 "Field of —"
45 Diverted
46 Metallic sound
47 Peter and Paul
48 Outfit
49 Indonesian islands
50 Carpentry item
52 Disregard
53 Norse writing
54 Narrative
55 Hwy.
56 Craving

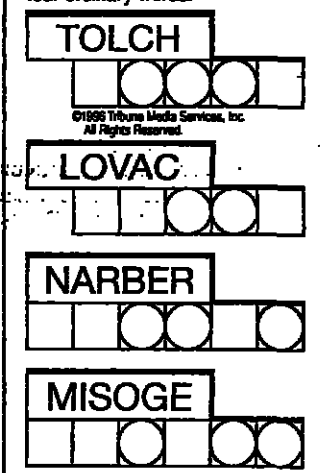
THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"If I tie my necktie really tight, it cuts off the circulation to my brain. That makes my life at the office a little easier."

JUMBLE

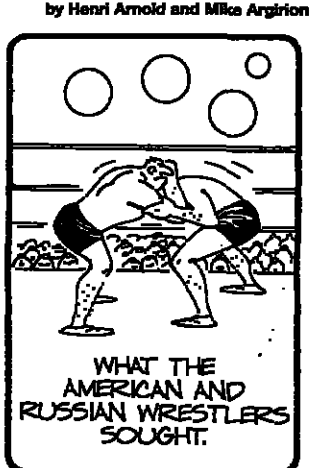
Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumble: GOING OLDER RABBIT OPATE
Answer: What he got for burning the barbecue dinner — A LOT OF RIBBING

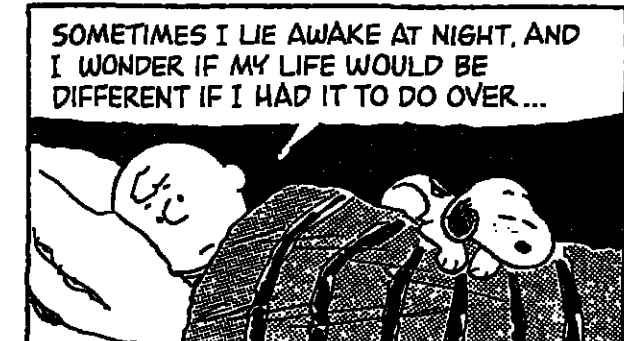
WHAT THE AMERICAN AND RUSSIAN WRESTLERS SOUGHT.



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One U.S. dollar	1.3756/66	Canadian dollar
	1.4554/64	Deutschmarks
	1.6298/08	Dutch guilders
	1.1804/14	Swiss francs
	29.93/97	Belgian francs
	4.9977/27	French francs
	1567.8/9.3	Italian lire
	105.05/15	Japanese yen
	6.7420/20	Swedish crowns
	6.3530/80	Norwegian crowns
	5.6241/41	Danish crowns
	1.4082/92	Singapore dollars
	0.7565/70	Australian dollars
	7.7320/30	Hong Kong dollars
One sterling	\$1.5370/80	
Gold (ounce)	\$398.30/398.80	

Dennis Conner uncertain he will challenge America's Cup again

AUCKLAND (AFP) — America's Cup legend Dennis Conner hinted Friday that he may not be in Auckland to challenge for the cup in the year 2000.

"Don't count on me," said Conner who is here for an invitation-only international Etchell's class regatta over the weekend.

"The U.S. yachtman said there was no chance of getting a sponsorship package together until two years before the cup, adding that he was uncertain there would be enough time to mount a serious challenge.

"Obviously the longer you have, and the more money you have, the better but that's not reality. I have no idea if two years is enough," he said.

"I am sure the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron and Peter (Sir Peter Blake) and Russell (Coutts) will do a great job running the programmes. It is just a matter of how many people will be able to raise the money and show up."

"As far as I am concerned I am not going to worry about

it until there is something I can do and I'll assess my plans in 1998," he said. "At this point I don't plan to front up the entry fee and be part of anything until I know if I can realistically attend."

"Conner said the only two confirmed entries were the New York Yacht Club and Nippon. "The rest are still dreaming until they have the money."

Conner however said he was keen to become involved in the Whitbread round the world race which could be done for a third of the cost of an America's Cup campaign.

The U.S. yachtman had his first America's Cup involvement in 1974 on Courageous, and nine years later lost the cup to Australia, then won it back in Perth in 1987. Last year, he lost the America's Cup to New Zealand.

In 1988, New Zealand banker Sir Michael Fay sprung a sudden challenge for the cup in KZL, an awesome 41-metre (135-foot) maxi yacht, after finding a loophole in the rules allowing him to build a large boat.

Conner, who did not have time to build a suitable contender, took advantage of another loophole and put together the 18-metre 59-foot catamaran Stars and Stripes in response to the challenge.

The catamaran won the first two of the best-of-three races as a catamaran is normally faster than a monohull.

The two continued their contest in several New York courts, both claiming the other had broken the rules, but the court eventually upheld Conner's win.

Conner said other contenders were not likely to show up for the event in 2000, including Bill Koch, who skippered America3 to beat Italy's Il Moro and win the cup at his first attempt in 1992.

Koch ran the America3 challenge again last year in a campaign skippered by New Zealander Leslie Egnot.

Buddy Melges, who sailed on the winning America's Cup boat in 1992 and is also in Auckland for the Etchell's regatta, said after the cup was

lifted by Team New Zealand it was difficult to stimulate corporate backing.

"Chevrolet, who sponsored America3 on two instances, has put the sailing game on the backburner and whether they will move it up front is another guess," Melges said.

He added that Koch seemed burned out.

"It's a long time between drinks and whether we can get him intoxicated again on America's Cup competition remains to be seen," Melges said.

Conner criticised the New Zealand organising committee for delaying the defence of the America's Cup until 2000, five years after the victorious Team New Zealand beat Conner 5-0 when Conner borrowed Young America in the final off San Diego.

"The event should be held sooner. Five years is a long time to wait," Conner said.

"We will just have to wait and see how much focus on the event is lost in the interim with lots of other sailing going on," he added.



Houston Rockets Tim Breazu (left) attempts to drive past Cleveland Cavaliers Bob Sura during second quarter NBA action at Gund Arena on Thursday Houston won 86-80 (Reuters photo)

Bulls, Rockets, Jazz win Phoenix move up in standings

ATLANTA (R) — Michael Jordan scored 34 points as the Chicago Bulls overcame a 17-point deficit to post their seventh straight win, a 96-91 victory over the new-look Atlanta Hawks on Thursday.

Scottie Pippen had 16 points and 10 assists. Luc Longley scored 20 points and Dennis Rodman grabbed 20 rebounds for Chicago.

Ron Harper added 12 points for the Bulls, who improved to 48-5 this season in their drive to become the first team in NBA history to win 70 games.

"I just wanted to relax and let the game come to me, especially in the last moments," Jordan said. "I needed to play veteran ball and use my head."

In Cleveland, Robert Horry scored 27 points and Hakeem Olajuwon and Sam Cassel added 13 apiece as the Houston Rockets defeated the Cleveland Cavaliers 86-80.

Terrill Brandon had 24 points for the Cavaliers, who have dropped two straight after a season-high eight-game winning streak. Danny Ferry added 17 and Bobby Phillips 14 as Cleveland had a six-game home winning streak snapped.

At Utah, Karl Malone scored 26 points and Jeff Hornacek added 22 as the Utah Jazz cruised to their fourth consecutive victory, a 102-86 win over the Toronto Raptors.

John Stockton had 14 points and 12 assists, and Chris Morris added 10 points for Utah, which won for the 14th time in 17 games.

In Portland, Aaron McKie scored 21 points and Rumeal Robinson, playing for the suspended Rod Strickland, added 18 as the Portland Trail Blazers routed the Denver Nuggets, 107-78, snapping their five-game losing streak.

Robinson scored 11 points in the first quarter as the Trail Blazers raced to a 28-12 lead and never trailed in coasting to their largest margin of victory this season.

Antonio McDyess led Denver with 21. Strickland, who was suspended prior to the game for

disciplinary reasons.

In Seattle, Gary Payton scored 19 points and Shawn Kemp added 18 as the Seattle SuperSonics cruised to their eighth consecutive victory, a 106-90 triumph over the Golden State Warriors.

Hersey Hawkins scored eight of his 16 points in a second-quarter run. Ervin Johnson had 11 points and 11 rebounds and Sam Perkins added 13 points for Seattle.

B.J. Armstrong scored 27 points for Golden State.

RESULTS			
Chicago	96	Atlanta	91
Houston	86	Cleveland	80
Utah	102	Toronto	86
Portland	107	Denver	78
Seattle	106	Golden State	90

STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE Atlantic Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Orlando	39	14	.736	—
New York	32	19	.627	6
Miami	24	29	.453	15
Washington	23	29	.442	15½
New Jersey	23	29	.442	15½
Boston	19	34	.358	20
Philadelphia	10	—	.196	28

Central Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Chicago	48	5	.906	—
Indiana	32	20	.615	15½
Cleveland	30	22	.577	17½
Atlanta	28	24	.538	19½
Detroit	26	24	.520	20½
Charlotte	26	25	.510	21
Milwaukee	20	31	.392	27
Toronto	14	37	.275	33

WESTERN CONFERENCE Midwest Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Utah	36	16	.692	—
San Antonio	34	17	.667	1½
Houston	35	20	.636	2
Denver	21	31	.404	15
Dallas	17	34	.333	18½
Minnesota	15	36	.294	20½
Vancouver	11	40	.216	24½

Pacific Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Seattle	40	12	.769	—
LA Lakers	32	19	.627	7½
Phoenix	25	26	.490	14½
Sacramento	24	25	.490	14½
Golden State	25	28	.472	15½
Portland	25	29	.463	16
LA Clippers	17	35	.327	23

Baseball spring training roundup Braves begin full workouts

WEST PALM BEACH (AP) — At last, there are no questions for the Atlanta Braves to answer at spring training. At least, none of the ones they're tired of hearing.

"It's a lot more relaxed this season than it has been," said pitcher Tom Glavine. "It's a lot more relaxing to answer questions about defending your championship than it is to hear questions like, 'are you the Buffalo Bills of baseball? Are you ever going to win the big game?'"

"That stuff, when you hear it all the time, it's real easy to get on the players' nerves," he said. "We always had a little bit more tense atmosphere than we have right now."

Glavine, MVP of the world series, and the Braves went through their first full workout at west palm beach, Florida. The Braves' new status was on display all over municipal stadium. It was hard to find a spot without a sign noting that this is the spring home of the 1995 champions.

Atlanta has essentially the same team it had last season. Missing are five role players — pitchers Kent Mercker and Alejandro Pena, outfielders Luis Polonia and Mike Devereaux and catcher Charlie O'Brien — who were trimmed from the roster to free money for re-signing first baseman Fred McGriff and outfielder Marouis Grissom. "Right now, everything is great for us," Glavine said. "We're the world champions. We have everyone back. And we're looking forward to doing it again."

★Padres

No surprise, Rickey Henderson hasn't shown up at

camp in Peoria, Arizona.

Tuesday was the day San Diego asked its position players to report, but Henderson, notorious for his late arrivals, wasn't there. The Padres did not know whether their new free agent would be on hand for a physical exam today or the team's first full-squad workout Thursday.

"I don't think Rickey's ever been an early guy to camp," Padres general manager Kevin Towers said. "I do think when he shows up he's going to be ready to play and ready to contribute. That's part of what he's done his whole career. There's no question in my mind that when he's here, he's going to be ready to play."

★Red Sox

Cancel that missing person report in Fort Myers, Florida. Jose Canseco is in town. Canseco missed Boston's first full-squad workout Tuesday morning, but checked into the clubhouse in the early afternoon.

Canseco said he was delayed by a charity golf tournament in west Palm Beach on Monday. He said he arrived in Fort Myers around 4 a.m.

"I had a long drive. I had a lot of things to take care of," he said. "I was sick with allergies. I just could not get up this morning."

Red Sox general manager Dan Duquette said Canseco should have been on time "out of respect for his teammates" and should have called to say he'd be late "as a professional courtesy."

★Yankees

From Lou Gehrig to Don Mattingly, greatness has

graced first base at Yankee stadium. Now, Tino Martinez has the opportunity to leave his mark.

"I'm not going to think about Don Mattingly on the field," said Martinez, acquired in an offseason trade with Seattle. "If I make an error or strike out, those things are going to be magnified early in the season. It's all part of replacing a legend."

Martinez hit .293 with 31 home runs and 111 RBIs last season when the Mariners won the AL West title.

"We traded for Tino Martinez because Don retired, even if it may only be temporary," manager Joe Torre said in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. "We needed a first baseman. If we get as much production as he had last year with Seattle, I'll be more than pleased."

★Cardinals

Ozzie Smith says he's concerned only with how well he plays, not about anyone else who plays shortstop for St. Louis.

The Cardinals traded for San Francisco shortstop Royce Clayton in the offseason, leading to speculation that Smith's career was near an end. But Smith, 41 and a 14-time all-star, said he isn't thinking about Clayton.

"The only pressure you have is the pressure you put on yourself," Smith said after the team's first full-squad workout in St. Petersburg, Florida. "I'm going to do what I've always done. If that's good enough to impress people, then so be it."

"I don't have anything to prove. I've had a great 18-year career," he said.

PSG face Auxerre today

PARIS (R) — Troubled French Soccer League leaders Paris St. Germain face a hard task against nearest rivals Auxerre for a place in the quarterfinals of the French Cup on Saturday.

The wealthy Paris club, who have lost their last three league matches, are now under threat from both Auxerre and Metz in the race for the championship and will find second-placed Auxerre a tough nut to crack in the cup.

PSG travel without injured midfielder Vincent Guerin and suspended defender Omar Dieng and another defeat would place Paris trainer Luis Fernandez, whose relationship with club chairman Michel Deniot has deteriorated in the last few weeks, in an uncomfortable situation.

"The players must take their responsibilities," he said. "They must not lose and they know it."

The cup programme features another clash between first division sides with Lille hosting Monaco, recovering after a slow start to the season.

The team from the principality are fourth in the league while Lille are fighting to avoid relegation and are pinning all their hopes on the cup to save their season.

"The players think they can win," said Lille trainer Jean-Michel Cavalli, whose team lost 4-1 to Le Havre last Saturday. "They lost because they didn't give it all they had," he said. "They already had Monaco in mind."

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Nomo signs 3-year deal

VERO BEACH (AFP) — The Los Angeles Dodgers have agreed to a three-year contract with pitcher Hideo Nomo of Japan, the 1995 National League Rookie of the Year. Terms of the deal were not disclosed, the Dodgers had reportedly offered him a three-year contract worth about \$4 million. Nomo, who joined the Dodgers last season after starring in the Japanese League, was 13-6 with a 2.54 earned run average and a league-high 235 strikeouts. The 27-year-old became the fourth consecutive Dodger to win the rookie award, following Erick Karros, Mike Piazza and Raul Mondesi. He also started the All-Star game for the National League. Nomo joined the Dodgers training camp here earlier this month, and is working on a curveball to complement the blistering fastball and forward-spinning forkball confounded opposing batters last season.

Uzbekistan leads in Davis Cup

MANAMA (AP) — Uzbekistan surged to a 2-0 lead against Bahrain as play began Friday in a delayed Group 2 Asia-Oceania Davis Cup tennis series. Dimitri Tomosvitch defeated Issam Abdul-aal, 6-3, 7-5, 6-3 while Oleg Ogorodov downed Shehab Rashid Shehab, 6-0, 6-1, 6-2. The three-day, best-of-five-matches encounter continues Saturday with doubles play. It had been scheduled for

earlier this month but was delayed because of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

Villa land England prospect

BIRMINGHAM (AFP) — Aston Villa boss Brian Little swooped on his former club Leicester to land highly-rated England Under-21 striker Julian Joachim. Little confirmed the League Cup finalists have agreed a free with Leicester and that Joachim has accepted personal terms and will sign subject to a medical. Little said: "He will give us extra competition for places and if he gets in the side, it's a question of his trying to stay there. He is the right age and calibre and I think he will do very well for us."

Helmut Schoen dies

WIESBADEN (AFP) — Helmut Schoen, who coached Germany to the 1974 World Cup title, has died, it was announced here on Friday. The 80-year-old Schoen, who managed the German team from 1964 to 1978, also won the European championship in 1972. Schoen's international record speaks for itself — 87 victories, 31 draws, and just 21 defeats. And Schoen was no slouch on the field and won German titles with Dresden — the league in 1943 and 1944, and the cup in 1940 and 1941. He also scored 17 goals in just 16 appearances for the German national side between 1937 and 1941.

Washington Bullets will be Washington Wizards

WASHINGTON (R) — The NBA Washington Bullets will become the Washington Wizards starting next season, team owner Abe Pollin said Thursday.

Pollin decided last year to drop the Bullets logo because it connotes violence in a city where guns and shootings had become commonplace.

Fans voted on the name Wizards after Pollin conducted a public campaign suggesting new names.

Batty on way to Newcastle

NEWCASTLE (AFP) — Title-chasing Newcastle took their spending over the last 12 months to 25 million pounds (about \$40 million) after agreeing a fee for Blackburn's unsettled midfielder David Batty on Friday.

Speculation had intensified over recent weeks that the former England midfielder, who has constantly denied a bust-up with Rovers manager Ray Harford, was on his way to the Premiership leaders.

Newcastle chief executive Freddie Fletcher confirmed the two clubs had agreed a price for Batty — believed to be 3.75 million pounds — and that they would hold talks with the player over the weekend.

Fletcher said: "We agreed a fee with Blackburn last night for the transfer of David Batty. David will receive a medical and discuss personal terms with us over the weekend."

Batty, 27, joined Rovers for \$2.75 million pounds from Leeds in October 1993 after winning a championship medal with the Yorkshire club the previous year.

He suffered a series of injuries last term but still picked up another title medal as Blackburn lifted the Premiership crown.

If his move to St. James' Park goes ahead, it would put him in line for a third championship medal, with Newcastle six points clear of Manchester United at the top of the Premiership with a game in hand.

His arrival would come not long after Newcastle splashed out 7.5 million pounds on Parma's Colombian striker Faustino Asprilla.

Barcelona beat Espanyol

BARCELONA (R) — A penalty from Romanian international Gheorghe Popescu gave Barcelona a 1-0 victory over neighbours Espanyol in their Spanish semifinal first leg game on Thursday.

A lacklustre match came alive in the 51st minute when Popescu converted a penalty after Abelardo Fernandez was brought down at a corner by Espanyol's Argentine defender Mauricio Pochettino.

Javi Garcia and Jordi Lardin, who hit the post with a left-foot effort, had several chances to put Espanyol back in the game, as Jose Antonio Camacho's side took advantage of the wide open spaces in the Camp Nou stadium to find room on the wings.

But the best opportunity fell to Barcelona's Bosnian forward Meho Kodro, who was put through beautifully by Ivan de La Pena but waited too long to shoot and found his route to goal blocked by Espanyol reserve keeper Raul Arribas.

The return leg will be played next week at Espanyol's Sarria ground.

TODAY AT

CINEMA

TEL: 634144

PHILADELPHIA

Jean Claude Van Damm
in
SUDDEN DEATH

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

CINEMA

TEL: 699238

PLAZA

Adel Emam/Dalal Abdel
Azeez/ Shereen Saaf AlNaser
Sleeping on Honey
(Arabic)

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA

TEL: 677420

CONCORD

CONCORD "1"
Adel Emam/Dalal Abdel Azeez/
Shereen Saaf AlNaser
Sleeping on Honey
(Arabic)
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:15, 10:30
CONCORD "2"
Van Dam/Roger Moore
THE QUEST

Shows: 12, 1:45, 3:30, 5:15, 6:45

AMMOUN THEATRE &
CINEMA/ TEL: 618274 - 618275

Ahmad Zaki / Ragdah
in
ESTAKOZA

(Arabic)
Shows: 12:30, 3, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

Nabil & Hisham's Theatre
TEL: 625155

"Ahlan Tatbie" play
Welcome Normalisation

Shows: 8:30 p.m.
For reservation call 625155



Boris Becker

No Atlanta Olympics for Becker

ANTWERP (R) — Boris Becker said on Thursday he would skip this year's Olympic Games in Atlanta for family reasons.

"I'm not alone any more in this world, I have a family — a wife and a son. (The Olympics) are between Wimbledon and the U.S. Open and I cannot be gone for eight weeks in a row, I'm not 18 any more," said Becker who won a gold medal at the 1992 Barcelona Games in the doubles with Michael Stich.

"It was a great experience but I've done it," said Becker, who played down the importance of Olympics for tennis.

"To tell you the truth, for all other sports, the Olympics is the pinnacle. For tennis I don't think it is," he said.

Becker beats Russian qualifier

Australian Open champion Boris Becker was forced to come from a set down to beat Russian qualifier Andrei Olhovskiy in the second round of the European Community championship on Thursday.

Top seed Becker, who missed Germany's recent Davis Cup match against Switzerland and the Dubai Open last week because of inflamed leg ligaments and a back problem, appeared sluggish in the first set.

But he raised his game in the second and went on to win 3-6, 6-4, 6-1.

The German produced some flawless serve-and-volley work against Olhovskiy, ranked 92nd in the

world, to set up a quarter-final tie with Spaniard Francisco Clavet.

"Andrei had an excellent start, he's very fast and I couldn't get into the match but then I started to read his game," said Becker, who has his sights set on regaining the world number one ranking, which he first held in 1991.

"It's not an obsession like the first time but it's a dream I have," said Becker, who added he was not obsessed either by the French Open, the only Grand Slam event which he has never won.

Earlier, Olympic champion Marc Rosset of Switzerland reached the quarter-finals with an emphatic 6-3, 6-3 win over Russian Alexander Volkov.

It was only eight-seeded

Rosset's fourth match of the year after his freak accident during an exhibition event in January.

Rosset broke his hand when he punched it through an advertising panel in frustration but said he now suffered enough for his stupidity.

"There is no use looking back. What's done is done, I regret it because it was stupid. I couldn't play the Australian Open and we lost our Davis Cup match (against Germany) because of it."

Sixth-seeded German Michael Stich beat Belgian Johan Van Herck 7-6, 6-4 in other second-round action.

"I'm strong, fit and happy to be in the quarter-finals but I still have to get used to playing again," said Stich.

Tomba wins 1st gold in world championships

SIERRA NEVADA (AP) — Italian Alberto Tomba ended a decade of frustration Friday with a victory in giant slalom in the World Alpine Skiing Championships, bringing him his first gold medal in the worlds in his fifth appearance.

Tomba, the three-time Olympic gold medalist, finished in a combined time of 1 minute 58.63 seconds for two runs, giving him a sizeable victory margin over Urs Kaelin of Switzerland in 1:59.07 and fellow Swiss Michael Von Gruenigen in 1:59.45. Lasse Kjus of Norway was fourth in 1:59.51.

Tomba, who led by .03 seconds after the first run over Kjus, .47 over Von Gruenigen and .65 over Kaelin, almost let victory slip away after about 15 seconds of the second run.

The muscular Italian went down on his side around a gate at the top of the course and, as it seemed he would crash out, used his strength and ability to right himself.

Taking advantage of the relatively short layout of 1,077 metres (3,533 feet) that ran almost like a slalom course, Tomba finished his second run in 1:01.09. It was still the second quickest of the run behind Kaelin who came across in 1:00.88.

"I did not sleep all night through because I was tense," Tomba said. "And now I feel extremely tired. I may go to bed early tonight ... I deserved this title."

"I deserved it last year when I was in top condition, and the championships were postponed," he added. "Most people thought I could win a medal in giant slalom, but not gold. I gave up some World Cup giant slalom races earlier this season but I recovered the giant slalom form in due time."

Tomba will be after his second gold in Sunday's slalom, the final event of the two-week championships.

"I run again Sunday —



Italian skier Alberto Tomba kisses the snow after winning the men's giant slalom race in the Alpine Skiing World Championships Friday. Tomba, the most successful Alpine skier

in Olympic history, captured his first Alpine Skiing World Championship gold medal on Friday (Reuters photo)

maybe I shouldn't sleep tomorrow," joked Tomba, who dedicated the win to his late grandfather.

The win gives Tomba every laurel in skiing. He has three Olympic golds, two silvers and has won 47 times on the World Cup circuit — No. 2 on the all-time list for men.

He becomes the third Italian man to win a world title in giant slalom joining Zeno Colò in 1950 and Gustavo Thoeni — Tomba's present coach — in 1974.

Tomba promised all season to win gold at these championships and break his jinx in the worlds. Ironically,

the win came in Spain in this southern resort, which he criticised earlier this year and likened to "skiing in Morocco."

Tomba apologised for his remarks when he arrived in Spain earlier this week and was warmly applauded after winning his gold medal.

The 29-year-old won a bronze in giant slalom in the 1987 championships but failed in the next three worlds to place in the top three. In '93 in Morioka, Japan, he skipped the giant slalom with illness and crashed out of the slalom.

The gold medal was the third in eight events for the Italian team and their fourth overall to lead the medal table. The other golds were for Isolde Kostner in Super-G and Deborah Compagnoni in giant slalom.

Kaelin, the '94 Olympic silver medalist in giant slalom and silver medalist in the '91 worlds, was not tickled to win silver again. He ranks third in this season's World Cup giant slalom standings.

"I didn't want the silver again, I really wanted to win gold ... but I got the silver and I accept it," he said.

Tim Hardaway moves to Miami on NBA trading day

NEW YORK (AP) — Tim Hardaway, Christian Laettner and Billy Owens were the biggest names to move Thursday on one of the busiest NBA trading deadline days in recent years.

Six deals involving 19 players were completed, with the Miami Heat making three trades.

The Heat added forward Walt Williams, forward-center Chris Gatling and guards Hardaway and Tony Smith.

The Atlanta Hawks acquired Laettner from the Minnesota Timberwolves and the Toronto Raptors picked up Sharone Wright from Philadelphia.

The biggest non-trade involved the Portland Trail Blazers, who failed to deal disgruntled guard Rod Strickland or forward Clifford Robinson. Strickland was suspended for one game by the Trail Blazers after he stormed off the court during warmups Thursday night.

"It did seem busier than usual," said NBA attorney Joel Litvin, one of the lawyers in charge of approving deals.

"It's a frenetic day and always is. Whether or not you have a lot of trades that take place, you have a lot of teams running trades by you. We're on phone all day with GMS."

Miami made all three of its trades within two hours of the 9 p.m. est deadline. The Heat picked up Hardaway and Gatling from Golden State for power forward Kevin Willis and guard Bimbo Coles, then acquired Williams and Tyrone Corbin from Sacramento for Owens and Kevin Gamble. Miami also added Smith from Phoenix for rookie Terrence Rensner.

Today obviously was a day that I felt was coming all along if we had the opportunity to improve the position of this team," Miami coach Pat Riley said. "It was a very difficult day for me personally."

The Hawks and Timberwolves beat the deadline by

several hours. Atlanta picked up Centres Laettner and Sean Rooks for center Andrew Lang and point guard Spud Webb.

Kevin McHale, Minnesota's vice president of basketball operations, said he was hoping to improve the team's chemistry.

"Everybody's got to understand there are roles that need to be played in the context of the team," McHale said. "If people don't accept that or don't understand that, it ends up being (conflict) all the time."

The 76ers sent Wright to the Raptors for forwards Ed Pinckney and Tony Massenburg. The Sixers also acquired the right to swap first-round draft picks with Toronto this year or in 1997.

"This was also done to free up money so that we could go after a quality group of free agents," said Sixers coach and general manager John Lucas, who signed Wright to a six-year, \$21 million contract which still has four years to run.

Pinckney and Massenburg will be free agents at the end of the season.

The Orlando Magic acquired Kenny Gattison and a second-round draft pick from the Vancouver Grizzlies for Jeff Turner. Gattison is expected to back up Shaquille O'Neal at center and Horace Grant at forward during the playoffs.

The Grizzlies had three second-round picks in the 1996 draft, having earlier obtained selections from Washington and the New York Knicks. Orlando will get the worst of the three.

Gattison is out with a pinched nerve in his neck and Turner is rehabilitating a knee injury. Both must pass physicals before the trade is completed.

Dominique Wilkins paid \$100,000 for cocaine

NASSAU (AP) — Former basketball star Dominique Wilkins allegedly paid \$100,000 for cocaine to a man whose body was later found burned beyond recognition, according to testimony during a coroner's inquest.

A Bahamas police constable, testifying in a Nassau courtroom this week, said the man who allegedly received the money told him Wilkins was cheated and never received the drugs.

"That's the craziest thing I've heard in my life," Wilkins, who once starred for the Atlanta Hawks and now plays for a team in Greece, said Thursday by telephone. "I never gave \$100,000 to anyone in my life, other than my mother."

A coroner's jury started hearing testimony into the deaths of Philip Collie, 37, and a girlfriend, Bianca Evans, 26. Their burned bodies were found in Collie's car Dec. 20, 1991.

The woman had disappeared a day earlier, her mother testified. Collie had been seen a few days earlier.

Testimony in the inquest put Wilkins in the Bahamas for short period in July 1991.

"I've been there 12, 13 times," he told the Associated Press from his home in Athens, Greece. "I may have been there in 1991. I don't know if that (year) was one of them."

Constable Raynard Woods, Collie's nephew, testified about a report he filed with police in 1991 that his uncle told him he, received the money from Wilkins and never intended to deliver the drugs.

The constable said his nephew told him he and a man who was running a basketball camp, Jeff Rodgers, teamed to cheat Wilkins out of the money; the number listed for Rodgers in the Nassau phone directory was not in service late Thursday.

"Did he tell you who supplied the \$100,000?" prosecutor Cleopatra Christie asked Woods.

"From Mr. Wilkins," the constable replied.

"This is the most bogus story I have ever heard," Wilkins said. "I'm shocked, stunned. I don't even know how to respond. This is totally ridiculous."

Woods testified that Collie confided he and Rodgers had concocted a story that the men who were going to deliver the cocaine had been caught and Collie had to use the \$100,000 to bail them out.

Wilkins said he and other NBA players participated in the basketball camp run by Rodgers.

"He would pay NBA guys to appear at the camp," Wilkins said. "Half the guys in the NBA know Jeff."

Woods said Collie was unemployed in 1991. He said at various times, Collie owned a Jaguar, a Rolls Royce and a Cadillac.

The bodies of Collie and his girlfriend were found in Collie's Cadillac near a pier in Nassau. Missing were Collie's feet, hands penis and testicles.

In the Bahamas, a coroner's inquest declares if there is a crime. The attorney general's office then decides if there should be a criminal investigation.

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GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF

A TAHARI HIRSH

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WHERE'S THE LOSER?

East-West vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
 ♠ Q 5
 ♥ 7 6 2
 ♦ A 9 8
 ♣ A K 10 7 2

EAST
 ♠ A 7 6
 ♥ A 10 8 4
 ♦ 10 7 6 3 2
 ♣ A 9 5

SOUTH
 ♠ A K 10 4 3 2
 ♥ J 5 3
 ♦ K J 5
 ♣ 4 4

The bidding:
 SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
 1♠ Pass 2♠ Pass
 2♥ Pass 3♥ Pass

Opening lead: King of ♠

Take a good look at the diagram. It might seem that your six-year-old daughter would be able to make 10 tricks at a spade contract, and you probably would be right. However, a world-class player managed to go down! This is what happened.

tract to reach, and the auction shown is typical for partnerships who play five-card majors and that a two-over-one response is a game force. The spade rebid in this sequence tends to promise a six-card suit, hence North's raise.

West led the king of hearts, on which East signalled enthusiastically. The queen of hearts was continued, followed by a third heart to the ace, with declarer contributing the jack.

From East's point of view it seemed unlikely that the contract could be defeated legitimately. Declarer could hardly have less than six spades headed by the ace and the king of diamonds, so declarer had no more apparent losers. The only chance was to convince declarer that the opponents were looking for a trump promotion.

Sitting the deed to the thought, East led the 13th heart. Declarer discarded a diamond and West ruffed with the nine, forcing the queen from dummy. Declarer decided that East had to have three trumps headed by the jack to adopt this defence, so continued by leading the eight of trumps and finessing the 10. Down one.

Russia suspends sanctions against Bosnia's Serbs

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Russia on Friday pulled out of U.N.-imposed sanctions against Bosnia's Serbs following a decree signed by President Boris Yeltsin, his office said.

Mr. Yeltsin made the decision after the Bosnian Serbs complied with conditions outlined by U.N. Security Council resolution 1022, the decree said.

Resolution 1022, which was adopted by the council on Nov. 22, provides for the suspension of sanctions against Bosnia's Serbs after an announcement by the commander of the Peace Implementation Force (IFOR) that Serbs had withdrawn from separation zones established by the Dayton peace accord.

In New York, Russia's ambassador to the United Nations announced the effective unilateral suspension of U.N. sanctions against Bosnia's Serbs, breaking ranks with the other members of the Security Council.

Russian Ambassador Sergei Lavrov told reporters

that Moscow was simply observing the terms of the U.N. resolution which provides for the sanctions suspension if certain conditions are met.

On Thursday, Russian diplomats at the United Nations denounced the request by IFOR commander Admiral Leighton Smith to delay suspension of the sanction by two days.

The Russian diplomats said the Security Council had no decision to take regarding the suspension of sanctions against Bosnia's Serbs which should have been removed days ago.

They referred to two letters from North Atlantic Treaty Organisation chief Javier Solana who informed the United Nations that the Serbs had complied with the peace accords by moving behind separation lines.

Western diplomats said Thursday that although the issue of suspending the Bosnian Serb sanctions was a "technical" matter in terms of the resolution, "there is

clearly a wider political interest" in ensuring that the Bosnian Serbs were complying in general with the peace accords.

In another development Friday, the U.N. refugee agency said Muslim-Croat federation police were frightening Serbs in a Sarajevo suburb they have just taken over by conducting unsupervised patrols and searches.

Their actions, breaking agreed rules on their conduct, would make a further exodus from Serb-held districts likely, said Kris Janowski, spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

"They are doing things which they are not supposed to be doing, patrolling around without any IPTF (International Police Task Force) supervision."

"They started a checkpoint on the road between Vogosca and Lijasc and they were stopping cars and checking identity cards, inspecting the boots. Serbs complained to us that they were frightened even

though they said the police were polite."

Vogosca is one of the five Sarajevo suburbs being transferred from Bosnia's Serb republic to its Muslim-Croat federation on March 20. In anticipation of the handover, federation police assumed jurisdiction in Vogosca on Friday morning.

Most of Vogosca's Serb population of 17,000 fled before the federation police arrived, fearful of reprisals for the 43-month Serb siege of Sarajevo.

But ground rules worked out with the IPTF included restrictions on federation police activity unless unarmed IPTF monitors were present. Unarmed police patrols and searches were specifically ruled out.

"This kind of unauthorised activity simply frightens the remaining Serbs and makes those who were still wavering in their decision about whether to stay or to leave less likely to remain in their homes," Mr. Janowski complained.

Israel, Hizbollah exchange artillery duels in S. Lebanon

MARJAYOUN, Lebanon (Agencies) — The Iranian-backed Hizbollah rained shells and mortars on three Israeli and militia positions Friday a day after two of their guerrillas were killed in southern Lebanon, security officials said.

The attacks were "in reply for Israeli air attacks against our villages in southern Lebanon," a Hizbollah spokesman in Beirut said, but Israel's proxy South Lebanon Army (SLA) said there had been no casualties.

Two Hizbollah fighters were killed Thursday when four Israeli fighters fired more than 10 air-to-ground missiles at positions in the Iqlim Al Tuffah heights bordering Israel's self-declared "security zone" in southern Lebanon, Lebanese security sources announced.

They were the first guerrillas to be killed this year in the region. The Hizbollah spearheads resistance to Israel's occupation of the border strip in southern Lebanon.

Israeli artillery bombarded Hizbollah strongholds in the heights in reply on Friday, Lebanese police said without giving details of any casualties.

The tit-for-tat artillery attacks followed two days of tension in the region, sparked by Israeli accusations that the Hizbollah on Tuesday dispatched an explosives-packed motorised hang-glider on a suicide mission to attack Israeli targets.

Hizbollah denied responsibility for the operation which failed when the light aircraft exploded in mid-air north of the security zone, but Israeli fighters raided guerrilla

strongholds on Wednesday and Thursday.

The Israeli fighters main target was "a Hizbollah training camp from which operations had been launched against Israel," a military spokesman said.

Meanwhile in Jerusalem an Israeli army spokesman said soldiers had shot and wounded three anti-Israel fighters in the zone on Friday, but they had managed to flee the scene.

A Hizbollah leader Sheikh Nabil Qauk warned "Israel against continuing its aggression."

"Our response will be very violent and very painful and we will deal them an unforgettable lesson if they are thinking of starting a new

(Continued on page 3)

Israel, Syria making effort to understand each other — Ross

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Two key figures in the Middle East peace process, Dennis Ross and Itamar Rabinovich, met with a group of Arab, Israeli and American students at the Israeli embassy in Washington Feb. 20 to discuss the region's political transformation.

Mr. Ross, the State Department's special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, began by noting the change in Syria's approach as the process began in Madrid and Oslo bore fruit over the past few years.

Now, with the redeployment of Israeli forces from much of the West Bank and completion of Palestinian elections, "there is a different kind of dialogue," Mr. Ross

said. For the first time Israelis and Syrians are making an effort to understand each other.

While there will continue to be "fits and starts" in their negotiations, a peace agreement between Syria and Israel is likely, an event which would "close the circle of conflict" between Israel and the Arab states, he said. For the first time, there is "a real prospect of transforming the region."

The reason for this is relatively simple, Mr. Ross added. "Basically, the peoples in the area do not see a realistic alternative to peace."

Mr. Ross made clear that he did not think that the Israeli elections, set for late

May, would upset the Israeli-Syrian negotiations. They are scheduled to resume next week at the Wye Plantation on Maryland's eastern shore.

"We made good headway" at the two previous rounds at Wye and will "try to build on what we've done," Mr. Ross said. "Our basic approach is not going to change."

Mr. Rabinovich, the Israeli ambassador to the U.S. began by noting that the periodic tensions which had previously cropped up in U.S.-Israel relations had virtually disappeared over the past three and a half years. The peace process also helped U.S. relations with

(Continued on page 7)

Israeli army, Palestinian gunmen exchange fire

GAZA (R) — Israeli troops and Palestinian gunmen exchanged fire in the Palestinian-ruled Gaza Strip on Friday, the Israeli army said.

Palestinian sources said they did not know of any casualties. An Israeli army spokeswoman said no Israelis were hurt.

"The incident happened after a number of shots were fired from the autonomous area at an Israeli patrol," the spokeswoman said. She said the gunmen escaped into the Palestinian-ruled area.

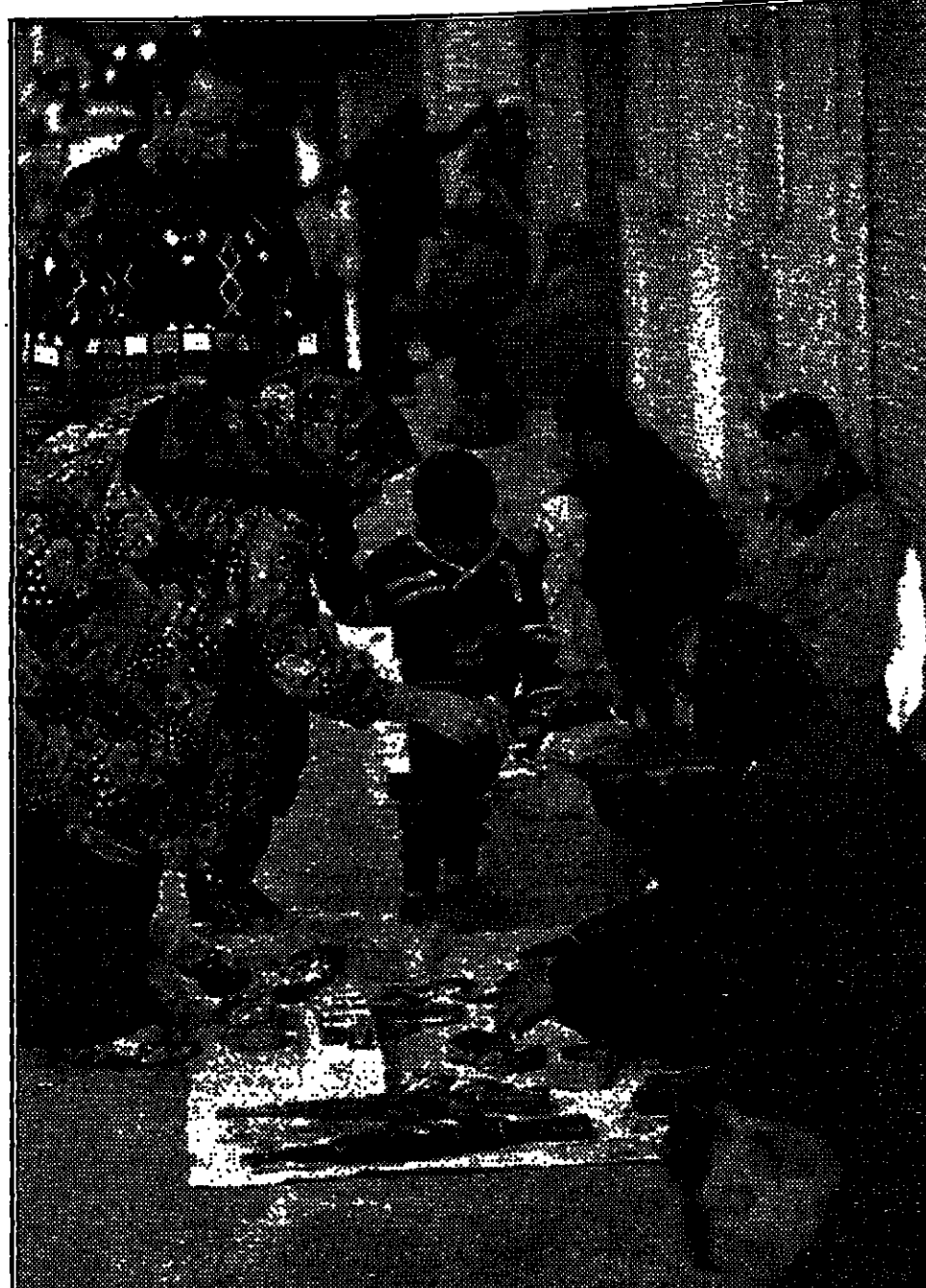
The spokeswoman said one Palestinian gunman might have been injured but none of Gaza's hospitals had received such a casualty.

A Palestinian border guard officer told Reuters there was heavy shooting from both sides at 4 a.m. (0200 GMT). He said police were not involved in the shooting and were still searching for the gunmen hours later.

The guard, Shafiq Abu Leileh, said: "Our checkpoints are 600 metres from where the Palestinians opened fire on the Israelis. The Israelis opened fire indiscriminately. They shot towards us."

He said the police at the checkpoint could not report the shooting to the Israeli-Palestinian district coordinating office because they lacked

(Continued on page 7)



A JORDANIAN WOMAN BUYS A TOY: A Jordanian woman buys a toy for her child on the third day of Eid Al Fitr from Iraqis displaying their goods at a street bazaar in the centre of Amman Thursday. Thousands of Iraqis fled to Jordan from economic hardship in Iraq, after the United Nations imposed sanctions on Baghdad following Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait (Reuters photo)

Mrs. Clinton hosts celebration to mark end of Ramadan

WASHINGTON (USIS) — This year in the United States, the completion of the Ramadan fast on February 20, was marked by a very special event. First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton hosted a celebration of Eid Al Fitr at the White House, marking the first time an Islamic holiday was ever celebrated there.

Approximately one hundred Muslims from around the country and their families were welcomed by the First Lady at a reception in the Indian Treaty Room of the Old Executive Office Building, which is part of the White House.

Mrs. Clinton called all Americans to learn to appreciate and understand the faiths of one another and said that she had learned much about Islam from her daughter, Chelsea, who has studied Islamic history at school. Mrs. Clinton also revealed that she had gained a greater appreciation of Islam during her trip with her daughter to several Islamic countries in South Asia last year.

"No matter what religion we follow," Mrs. Clinton warned, "we must not allow extremists of any faith to manipulate the priorities and values of the majority of that religion's followers. We have

seen what tragedies can happen when religion, whether it is Christianity, Judaism or Islam, is exploited for political gain. If we employ religion as an excuse for intolerance, divisions or violence, we betray its purpose."

The Eid reception was sponsored by the American Muslim Council (AMC) which during Ramadan hosted the first-ever iftar (breaking of the daily fast) dinner celebration on Capitol Hill for members of the U.S. Congress, representatives from government agencies, the Clinton administration and Muslim, Christian and Jewish leaders from the local community and from across the nation.

Khaled Saffuri, assistant executive director of the American Muslim Council, presented Mrs. Clinton with a copy of Holy Koran and told the first lady: "We are proud to participate in the growing recognition of the mainstream Muslim community and to encourage its role in American political life." Mr. Saffuri acknowledged the Eid Al-Fitr reception and President Clinton's remarks to Muslims around the world delivered earlier that day "as an example of the Clinton administration's efforts to reach out to the American Muslim community."

In the United States today there are more than 1,000 mosques, of which more than three-fourths opened since 1980, and an estimated five million Muslims. Through immigration, births and conversions, Islam is one of the fastest-growing religions in the United States.

Also present at the White House reception was Imam Abdul Rasheed Mohammad, the first Muslim chaplain of the U.S. Army, who was commissioned as an army chaplain with the rank of Captain in 1993. Imam Mohammad, who travelled to Washington especially to attend the reception, recited verses from the Koran and then presented Mrs. Clinton with a copy of the Muslim holy book.

Earlier, in a taped Eid greetings to Muslims around the world, President Clinton extended "my personal greetings to the entire Muslim community, here in the United States and around the world, as it celebrates the Eid Al Fitr. It is a time for rejoicing and celebration, but it is also a time for reflection and rededication. On this occasion, let us rekindle our commitment to the cause of peace among all of the people of the earth."

reconciliation with his feared father-in-law.

Gen. Kamel's companions said that he had been in contact with Saddam Hussein for some time through intermediaries in his efforts to be allowed back to Iraq.

One aide disclosed that Gen. Kamel had asked his uncle, Abed Hassan Al Majid who is close to Saddam's inner circle, to intercede with the Iraqi leader. Raghad, who had been Saddam's favourite daughter, "played a big role in the contacts," he said. "She used to call her father, often pleading repentance and begging him to allow her to return home."

"Recently, Abed Al Majid gathered the family, including Saddam, his sons and his wife, and told them that Hussein Kamel wanted to return and was pleading for clemency," he said. He said that it took Saddam, who had been seriously embarrassed and humiliated by the defections of people so close to him, "some time to decide because his sons had initially rejected clemency for Gen. Kamel."

Saudi dissident appeals British deportation order

LONDON (AFP) — A Saudi dissident ordered by Britain to leave because his presence is endangering lucrative arms contracts with Riyadh Friday told an appeals hearing he had been tortured in a Saudi prison.

Mohammad Al Masaari, a vocal critic of the Saudi government, was ordered to leave last year by the home office.

Mr. Al Masaari, who heads the fundamentalist Committee for Defence of Legitimate Rights, has been a thorn in Riyadh's side since coming to Britain a year ago.

From a house in north Lebanon, he has prepared Saudi Arabia with a deluge of daily faxed opposition tracts attacking the Saudi government, and the Saudis have threatened to review their huge defence contracts with British firms.

Mr. Al Masaari is appealing the government's efforts to deport him to the Caribbean island state of Dominica, which has agreed to give him asylum. He claims he would not be safe there.

On the second day of his hearing, he told of being detained in Saudi Arabia in 1993 and spent six months in prison after helping to estab-

lish his political opposition group.

During his detention, he said, he was regularly tortured, kept in isolation, deprived of sleep and kept under 24-hour video surveillance.

"I was beaten with a bamboo cane on my back several times, also on the soles of my feet," he said.

"Four officers will come, two will lift the feet, the soles were exposed and a third officer would beat on both soles, usually stopping before bleeding. The fourth officer stands there urging them on."

He said he was also beaten by security staff with their fists, on one occasion so badly that he could not sleep on his side for two months.

Mr. Al Masaari's lawyer, Andrew Nicol, submitted a list of assassination and abduction orders around the world in which, Mr. Al Masaari alleges, the Saudi authorities were implicated. He contends they would come for him in Dominica.

Home Office ministers have acknowledged that the deportation order was influenced by the need to maintain relations between Britain and Saudi Arabia.

Isolation prompted Iraqi defector's return home

By Jamal Halaby
The Associated Press

AMMAN — Deserted by his friends and under pressure from his homesick wife, Iraq's highest-ranking defector was back in Baghdad Wednesday with a reported pardon from his father-in-law, Saddam Hussein.

But for Lt. Gen. Hussein Kamel, who is married to Saddam's eldest daughter Raghad, the future still looks uncertain after his ill-fated mutiny against the unpredictable and usually unforgiving Iraqi leader.

The state-run Iraqi television network reported late Tuesday that Gen. Kamel and his brother Col. Saddam Kamel — who is married to another Saddam's daughter Rana — and their entourage arrived in Baghdad after a 12-hour drive across the desert from Amman.

It gave no details of how they were welcomed. But it said that Saddam had agreed to allow them to return after the defector pleaded for a pardon Saturday.

Iraq's ruling Revolutionary Command Council,

which Saddam heads, Monday "decided to approve his appeal and allow him to return to Iraq and deal with him as an ordinary citizen," the TV said.

An official at the Iraqi embassy in Amman, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Tuesday after Gen. Kamel set off for Baghdad that he "will be safe and welcomed in his country and will not be punished for his misdemeanor."

Others who crossed Saddam, even members of his family, have not been so lucky.

But whatever the future holds for Gen. Kamel, who for years directed Saddam's clandestine weapons programmes, by all accounts his life in Jordan was pretty miserable following his dramatic defection Aug. 8 and vow to bring down the Baghdad regime.

Aides told the Associated Press that once it became clear that Iraqi opposition groups, as well as Arab and Western governments, were giving the cold-shoulder rather than hailing him as a hero, Gen.

Kamel became moody and morose, often violent, cursing his fate.

Nayef Tawarrah, editor of Al-Bilad newspaper, said Sunday he took legal action against Gen. Kamel last week after the defector threatened to send "his bodyguards after me to 'liquidate' me" because he was angry over how the weekly ran an interview with him.

The warm welcome he received from Jordanian officials in August soon palled as they found that Gen. Kamel was not going to rally Iraqi dissidents behind him.

The dissidents felt that since he had been a member of Saddam's inner circle, he was much to blame for the atrocities carried out by the Baghdad regime as Saddam and wanted nothing to do with him.

Jordanians who were in contact with Gen. Kamel in Amman said that throughout his six-month sojourn here he was a virtual recluse in the hilltop Hashemiyeh palace, a white-stone mansion on the outskirts of the city which the government made available

to him. The information said Gen. Kamel spent most of his time away from his wife and three children, sitting alone in a rocking chair in the palace's main chamber staring at the West Bank mountains across the Jordan River.

He refused to allow his family to mingle with Jordanians and they rarely went outside the palace compound, the informants told the Associated Press.

One of his aides, who returned to Iraq Tuesday, said before he left that Gen. Kamel hurried an ashtray at another defector, Iraqi journalist Maad Fayyad, because he did not like the questions he was asking.

"He'd become difficult and hot-tempered lately because he was rejected, deserted by everybody, including his cousins and other relatives who had fled Iraq with him," said the aide, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Last November, Gen. Kamel, frustrated and bitter, had a nervous breakdown, the sources reported. That seems to have spurred the effort for a

reconciliation with his feared father-in-law.

Gen. Kamel's companions said that he had been in contact with Saddam Hussein for some time through intermediaries in his efforts to be allowed back to Iraq.

Continued on page 7

COLUMBIA
Diana's interview gets top media awards

LONDON (AFP) — Martin Bashir, the man who persuaded Princess Diana to give the BBC Television interview which sent shock waves through Britain last year, scooped two media awards on Thursday. Mr. Bashir won the interview of the year prize at the Royal Television Society's Awards the London Hilton Hotel. His BBC Panorama programme — in which Princess Diana spoke of her husband Prince Charles' adultery, her extra-marital affair, her self-mutilation and bulimic — was watched by more than 23 million Britons in November and millions more around the world. Channel 4 programme, "Dying Rooms" a documentary on orphanages in China which caused a minor international incident, took the International Award. The BBC recorded an emphatic victory at the ceremony, winning a record 11 of the 19 awards and one of the two special commendations.

Women admitted to university club

LONDON (AFP) — Nearly 200 years of club tradition has ended after male members of the United Oxford and Cambridge University Club voted to admit women on equal terms, the Times reported Friday. The vote was the result of a postal ballot declared Thursday in favour of opening the club on London's Pall Mall to women by 2,011 votes to 345. Club Chairman Bryan Nicholson told the daily that the result was "overwhelming and said he hoped the club would progress into the next century with "renewed vigour". The last ballot, in 1997, was also in favour of equality but was declared void under club rules because only 49 per cent of members voted. This time, 71 per cent of the 3,333 full members voted. There are currently 50 women associate members who are banned from the members bar.

Policeman speaks for second day since surgery

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (R) — Gary Dockery, brain-damaged former policeman who woke last week for the first time in seven years, spoke to nurse Thursday, the second day he has spoken since lung surgery last week. Hospital officials said Dockery said "yes, ma'am" to a nurse, said Lt. Watkins, spokeswoman at Columbia Parkridge Medical Centre in Chattanooga, where he was listed in stable condition. She said Dockery, 42, was moved Thursday to a private room from intensive care, where he had been since surgery. According to hospital statement, Dockery also spoke Wednesday. He said his first words were "yes, ma'am" and last name twice. He was asked by a nurse at 12:30 p.m. "It was a tremendous rush," programme statement quoted Kaplan saying. "I glowed. The witness was a tremendous gain for a person who is severely disabled." Dr. Kaplan had said before the Mr. Dockery's speech that he was "something more than an isolated one-time event. It is very encouraging." gesturing more speech was to come. "Hospital officials said Mr. Dockery's lung tubes were removed Wednesday and he was only nasal oxygen.